

## Crash barriers are fatal for motorcyclists!

**A summer with low fatality rates in Sweden for motorcyclists is soon over. The Swedish Motorcyclists Association, SMC, is convinced that the numbers could have been reduced with a more motorcycle friendly road environment. Six out of 22 motorcyclists who have been killed on a motorcycle in 2014 have collided with a crash barrier. The share of barrier accidents of all fatalities is 27 percent, which is the highest number ever in Sweden. The share is also high in an international comparison. Dangerous barriers does not only cost lives, they also mean huge costs for the society.**

The indepth studies of fatal motorcycle accidents (produced by the Swedish Transport Administration), show that in every third single motorcycle accident, the rider collided with a crash barrier. This year the share is even higher. There are several reasons. Crash barriers are installed in the middle of and on the side of more and more roads which increases the injury risk for motorcyclists. There are no safety demands on the barriers for other road users than those who are travelling in a car. The barriers are allowed to be installed very close to the road. Side barriers are used more frequently instead of forgiving road sides.

Five out of six fatal accidents this year occurred on the TENT-roads with the highest safety demands and thus also higher speed limits (100-120 km/h). At the same time this is where most fatal motorcycle accidents occur. In the last six years, 15 out of 25 fatal motorcycle accidents where the rider crashed into a barrier, happened at a TENT-road.

SMC calls for a new way of thinking. Smoother median and side barriers without unprotected poles are needed. The barriers must be installed further away from the road than what is allowed today. It is obvious that a forgiving roadside should be used where it is possible, instead of side barriers.

SMC presumes that the high share of fatal motorcycle accidents with barriers, and the high amount on the TENT-roads, is an alarmbell to all road owners.

- As a representative for the Swedish riders I am horrified with the high number of motorcycle accidents. Everyone is aware of the fact that barriers and motorcyclists is an unhealthy combination. Still very little is done in order to secure the road environment for motorcyclists when it comes to barriers, says Jesper Christensen, general secretary of SMC.
- According to the calculation model of the Swedish Transport Administration, the cost of the society for killed and severely injured motorcyclists in crash barrier accidents during the last six years has passed one billion Swedish kronas\* (1 255 275 000). The Swedish society would save not only lives and life long suffering, but also money with another way of planning and building the road environment. We are aware that 5,5 billion Swedish kronas are budgeted in order to install more barriers on the Swedish roads in the coming years. We can only hope that this amount is spent in a wise way, that safer barriers are used and installed where they don't pose a danger to the lives of motorcyclists.

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