

GET SAFE!:

The Irish Biker Community's Answer of Whether "TO ACT, OR NOT TO ACT"

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My name is Ruairi here in sunny, County Kerry, Ireland. I have been a GWRRA Member for a few years now and enjoy reading the comings and goings in *Wing World* magazine.

Over the summer months, I read with interest the articles on "whether to get involved and assist" at the scene of a Road Traffic Collision (RTC), or to just feel helpless and stressed. So here's my contribution to the possibilities of "what a difference a biker can make to the outcome of another" at the scene. I am writing as a First Bike on Scene (FBoS) – Emergency Response Skills Course Instructor (provider and practitioner) in emergency care.



My Background

My initial interest in all things motorcycling comes from a lifelong experience of growing up with parents who were enthusiasts. I joined the biker ranks many years ago and always had in mind that, with only two points of contact with the road, you need to drive/ride with a different level of perception than may be called upon when driving a car.

I spent many hours working in Emergency Departments (EDs) and witnessed one of the most commonest of problems for bikers as they fell into the driver's "SMIDSY event" (translated, "Sorry Mate, I Didn't See You"). In fact, the depiction in the October 2012 *Wing World's* "Red Page" (page 12) shows just such an SMIDSY event a driver and biker T-bone impact.

UK & Ireland Figures

In 2005, some figures issued in the UK relating to motorcyclists Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) motivated the North West Ambulance Services (nwas.nhs.uk) in Northern England to initiate a one-day study-skills

development program known as First Bike on Scene (FBoS). Over the years, it has served the UK population of motorcyclists well and has assisted many bikers to feel more equipped for First on Scene activity.

In 2009, the Road Safety Authority of Ireland (RSA.ie) published similar figures, but with a noticeably smaller volume of bikers. Yet their KSI figures were remarkably higher—almost double those in the UK!

How FBoS Came to Ireland

Motivated by this Irish phenomena, my paramedic colleague, Nick, and I decided to enquire if such a program could be established in the Republic of Ireland & Northern Ireland. We set up the process of authentication (with nwas.nhs.uk) and gained appropriate accreditation from the validating body, The Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh, Faculty of Pre-Hospital Emergency Care, that issues certification for the three specific competencies to top course members upon successful completion. These competencies are the fulcrum of the FBoS-ers here in Ireland.

The three skills most called upon at the RTC are: Learning how to contain the scene; maintaining everyone's safety; and having a swift and timely triage process to get the EMS on their way. The three competencies developed and assessed in the day are Helmet Removal, Log Roll and Spinal Injury Care; lastly, are the skills needed for CPR.

We started the program (primarily weekends) last October 2011 with 12 willing volunteers. We didn't really know how many times we'd run it a year, but we figured the demand would be to train around 50 or so. To date, we're at 210 FBoS-ers members...and they all have one thing in common—they are bikers who can make a difference and not feel helpless at the scene!

For More Info...

If you want to see what the Irish biker community thinks about the training and their newfound readiness to act (after the course), have a look at the Facebook page link (facebook.com/pages/BIKERS-Training-Ireland/241944205860079?sk=info).

Best wishes to all two and three wheelers. Remember, always watching them (the car and truck drivers) helps keep you safe!