

KHOG SAFETY ARTICLE - JUNE 2017 "CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? (PART II)"

Last month I began on a journey that I knew was going to last a while. How long, exactly, I wasn't sure. A few weeks into it, I'm still not sure. It doesn't bother me. I'm not even exactly sure of the destination! I know though, that there are several points along the way that I want to hit because I think they are interesting to explore. For me, that is what has always made for a good motorcycle trip. Get a few general ideas and just start going, just as long as the risks are managed and I'm keeping good communication going with others who have an interest.

What is that journey? Well, it is exploring the ways that you can communicate your need for help in the event of an emergency while out enjoying your own motorcycle journey. Most all of us have some sort of mobile phone that we carry in our pockets, purses, or in a compartment on the bike. Mobile phones are perhaps one of the most efficient ways to dispatch emergency help to your location as you can verbally interact with those sending help when you call 9-1-1. Unfortunately, those phones aren't always going to be of use as many things can happen to interfere with that option. Often, in rural areas, we can find ourselves in areas where there is no phone service available for our mobile devices. If riding alone, and you become severely injured in an accident, you may not be able to function to operate the phone, or it could even break in the accident. What if the battery is dead? What happens then?

Last month, we touched on the benefits of multiple communication devices and we discussed the Citizens Band (CB) radio, as a perhaps-antiquated but direct, point-to-point, no-nonsense way of transmitting emergency traffic from a motorcycle or a hand-held device. We also discussed how important it is to somewhat plan a route, communicate it with someone else, and regularly check in. While the regularly-timed check-in with someone may feel like you are required to be accountable to someone, it also enables the other party to account for you and your safety! Think of it as someone in your battalion being on overwatch, or perhaps even a guardian angel, who is dedicated to your well-being.

I feel that spending time on this particular point in this journey is important as, with summer upon us, many of us are taking advantage of the long days and warm weather to get some serious miles on our iron horses. Many of our journeys will take us out west, into the mountains, and the prairies, where mobile phone service providers seemingly fear to tread.

Imagine there being devices that can help you and others track where you are, as well as alert others in case of emergency. Global Positioning System (GPS) technology has come a long way and there are many options to help you remember where your new favorite mountain pass is as well as keep you safe. While the application of those technologies vary as much as the prices, many are based on the same platform: satellite communications. They don't require carrying a briefcase around and setting up a small receiver dish on your saddlebag lid. Many are actually the size of the mobile phone device you already carry, if not smaller. While not a comprehensive list of options, companies like Garmin, ACR, and Spot have integrated personal locator beacons (PLBs) with satellite messaging into a handheld device. At the press of a

button, they will notify emergency response dispatchers of your location and send help. It won't necessarily be a fast response, but some options will also allow you to message friends or family who may be in your area as well. Still others are capable of two-way messaging in case you are needed back home. In fact, these devices and services are so reliable, many who travel in backcountry areas or have overseas work assignments carry them as good insurance. As a motorcycle enthusiast, the perpetual pursuit of free-range and open space is part of our journey. If you happen to be family-oriented, or have responsibilities at home, you may be well-served by learning more about this type of emergency communication.

In closing, it can perhaps be said that sometimes these safety articles sound like sales presentations for devices or products. Those who say it are close to being right. I am presenting to you that there are many, many things a person needs to have in mind when riding a motorcycle. If a tool or device is an idea that may help, I'm going to tell you about it. I don't want you to survive on motorcycles, I want you to THRIVE on motorcycles! Motorcycles themselves are not dangerous. The mindset of the person in the seat is always the threat. Please plan ahead, bring adequate tools to meet your needs, be aware of your surroundings, and play well with others on the road. Your well-being is what I am asking for to close the deal.

Next month, we will spend time in this journey discussing mobile phones and touch a on few tips & tricks that they have up their sleeve beyond just being a telephone. In the meantime, take 10 minutes before you ride to do a T-CLOCS check on your bike, sign up for a rider skills course, and live to ride another day.

....and "Hey! Let's be CAREFUL out there!"

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