

Motorcycle toolkit – providing guidance on anti-social road use and encouraging responsible riding

The motorcycle toolkit was produced to assist police officers dealing with motorcyclists at the side of the road for road traffic collisions (RTCs) and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

First published
19 January 2026

Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Anti-social behaviour Community engagement Roads policing
Organisation	Sussex Police
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Region	South East
Partners	Police
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	March 2025

Key details

Scale of initiative	National
Target group	Communities General public Workforce

Aim

The aim of the motorcycle toolkit is to:

- provide guidance to officers responding to anti-social road use caused by motorcyclists and encourage responsible riding
- pro-actively and reactively engage and stop motorcyclists who are riding anti-socially
- upskill the knowledge and confidence of all frontline officers to achieve consistency when engaging with motorcyclists

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the motorcycle toolkit are to:

- reduce the number of complaints of anti-social road use by motorcyclists
- reduce the number of motorcycle road traffic collisions (RTCs)
- improve the safety of motorcyclists and other road users

Description

Within the South East, the number of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured (KSI) is disproportional in comparison to any other road user. One in five RTC deaths are motorcyclists, however they only account for 1% of road user traffic.

To reduce the number of motorcycling RTCs and improve motorcyclists' safety, Surrey Police and Sussex Police jointly launched Operation Downsway. As part of Operation Downsway, a review was conducted which identified law enforcement rates for motorcyclists. Further research looked at

enforcement data covering all construction and use offences (driving a vehicle in a dangerous condition due to its state, modifications, or overloading, covering issues) and feedback from departments such as roads policing, casualty reduction and neighbourhood teams. The review and research identified knowledge gaps in motorcycle construction and use offences and licence requirements.

In response, an officer from the Sussex Police road safety team designed and created the motorcycle toolkit. The force sought permission from manufacturers to use their pictures of motorcycles. The document was peer reviewed by ten officers, from police constable to chief superintendent rank.

The 18-page PDF provides step-by-step advice on motorcycle engagement based on the front-line officers' previous experience. The purpose of the toolkit is to support officers who are called out to RTCs and anti-social riding. There are clear illustrations to assist officers as well as videos and a mnemonic to follow when roadside with a motorcycle. The road traffic legislation used throughout the document is concise and explains practical details, such as example exhaust offences and checking tyres. The contents of the toolkit include:

- motorcycle types
- rider profiles
- perspectives from motorcyclists
- guidance on how to engage with motorcyclists
- current legislation
- Sussex Police's safety initiatives

The motorcycle toolkit uses the Safe Systems approach, which is now standard across all police forces, working alongside a clear-hold-build problem-solving methodology. Safe Systems is built on five principles:

- safe roads
- safe speeds
- safe vehicles
- safe road users
- post-crash care: recognising that while human error is inevitable, the road system should prevent mistakes from becoming fatal

The Safe Systems approach identifies immediate problems, maintains improvements through enforcement and monitoring, then develops sustainable long-term solutions. This evidence-based approach allows motorcyclist safety to be approached holistically, not just through enforcement.

The motorcycle toolkit is hosted on the force Quick Guides app. It is accessible to officers on their work computers, mobile phones and mobile data terminal (MDT) device. There have been additional updates made to the toolkit, and there is scope to add additional guidance on electric powered two-wheelers.

Cost and senior management approval

There was no cost involved in the development of the motorcycle toolkit. The toolkit has been shared at senior leader conferences and national working group meetings.

The toolkit was approved by senior officers and the internal media team.

Overall impact

- The motorcycle toolkit has been developed to improve officers' and road users' knowledge, confidence and motivation. During the first year, motorcycle fatalities reduced by 33% (five fatalities) and complaints of anti-social road use reduced by 30% (approximately 300 reports).
- Feedback from officers has been positive, who have welcomed the clear and concise layout. Feedback shows the document has resonated with road policing specialists through to front-line response and neighbourhood teams. Officers have found by using the toolkit, they were more likely to stop motorcycles and felt more confident in dealing with anti-social riding.
- In September 2025, the motorcycle toolkit was signed-off and endorsed by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). The toolkit has now been re-branded as an NPCC product.
- Feedback has been extremely positive from front-line officers and senior leaders. The toolkit has been peer reviewed to ensure any feedback can be captured from a subject matter expert, strategic leaders, and officers.
- Sussex Police ran Operation Downsway every weekend from April 2025 to September 2025, targeting anti-social road use and engaging with motorcyclists. Typically, these months are the highest in collisions and anti-social reports. This expanded into Surrey, which saw a reduction of 17% in motorcyclists KSIs.

Learning

What went well

- awareness of the toolkit has been vital to the success of the initiative, the demand to deal with anti-social motorcyclists was already high, and the toolkit provided a structured solution
- the toolkit has been distributed across Sussex Police and Surrey Police via the Quick Guides app to ensure immediate reference during stops
- regular intranet articles before and during operations have enabled the motorcycle toolkit to be regularly used during stops
- both forces discovered significant value for local neighbourhood officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) who are frequently reported to about noisy motorcycles but lacked the specialist roads policing support due to resource constraints

Barriers

- the toolkit's format could be better optimised for mobile device use to improve usability at the roadside
- prior to implementation, there was no records of engagement stops with motorcyclists to compare against, making it difficult to measure improvement in engagement levels

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