

**SKILLED MOTORCYCLIST ASSOCIATION—RESPONSIBLE, TRAINED AND EDUCATED RIDERS, INC.**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **NTSB 2013 Most Wanted List: The truth regarding motorcyclist safety**

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**Scottville, MI** – The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), on Nov. 14, 2012, announced its “Most Wanted List,” identifying the top ten transportation challenges for 2013 (<http://www.nts.gov/news/2012/121114.html>), and motorcycles/motorcyclists were not on the list. That same date, a national bikers’-rights organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., issued a news release ([http://www.mrf.org/2012/news\\_release/12NR31.htm](http://www.mrf.org/2012/news_release/12NR31.htm)) providing its interpretation why the NTSB list did not include motorcycles or motorcyclists. The Skilled Motorcyclist Association—Responsible, Trained and Educated Riders, Inc. (SMARTER) researched the publically available information and then contacted a representative of the NTSB to confirm our findings. We believe riders, public policy decision makers and the public deserve unambiguous, factual information.

The news release claims NTSB changed its position recommending mandatory helmet laws; however, NTSB’s position remains unchanged since Oct. 3, 2007, when it first issued its recommendations H-07-038, H-07-039 and H-07-040, which can be found by entering these codes at this site: <http://www.nts.gov/safetyrecs/private/QueryPage.aspx>. The full letter, which can be viewed by clicking on “View NTSB Recommendation Letter [PDF],” provides background and references for each recommendation. The bottom line is that NTSB recognizes the importance of universal helmet laws as a component of a comprehensive motorcyclist-safety program.

The news release also refers to four NTSB Most Wanted Lists: 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. The truth is that motorcyclist safety first appeared on the NTSB Most Wanted List in Nov. 2010. The Nov. 2010 list was updated June 23, 2011. The June 23, 2011, list was updated Nov. 14, 2012. There was no separate 2012 Most Wanted List. While this is a bit confusing, the fact is the news release contained misleading information.

The NTSB Most Wanted List issued in Nov. 2010 clearly contained the recommendation for all states to require all riders to wear helmets, in accordance with the NTSB official position issued Oct. 2007 referenced above. While it is true that the language in the June 2011 list is different from the language in the Nov. 2010 list, the changes made had nothing to do with NTSB moving from “requiring” helmet use to “voluntary” helmet use.

NTSB remodeled the entire Most Wanted List program between Nov. 2010 and June 2011 and significantly changed how they wrote about issue areas, in order to take a broader, more high-level approach, as evidenced by the markedly different descriptions NTSB wrote before and after June 2011 about runway safety, for example, or human fatigue. This total remodel is strong evidence that changes in NTSB’s Most Wanted List presentation regarding motorcyclist safety

were not due to a changed position or pressure from bikers'-rights organizations. NTSB asked for universal helmet laws in 2007 and has continued to seek universal helmet laws ever since, regardless of how the Most Wanted List issue area has been written.

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*The Skilled Motorcyclist Association—Responsible, Trained and Educated Riders, Inc. (SMARTER) is dedicated to enhancing motorcyclist safety by educating riders and the public for the advancement of responsible riding.*