



**Red Knights Motorcycle Club**  
Massachusetts — Home of the Founders

Fall 2013  
<http://massredknights.org/>

The Spring 2014 State meeting is being hosted by Mass-15 in Newton on May 18, 2014 .  
The Fall 2014 meeting will be hosted by Mass-13.

*From the desk of the State Rep*

Greetings all Massachusetts Red Knights.

This is the fifth edition of the Massachusetts State Red Knights Newsletter.

Assistant State Rep. Bob Laford is the editor and publisher and we all owe him a resounding "Thank you" for his work on this communication medium we have for our state Red Knights.

As you are aware the number of emails I send out to you is legendary, but it was my promise to you when I was voted into the position as your state representative that I would keep you informed.

To that end I would like to continue as YOUR state Representative. Voting for that position will take place at the Fall 2014 state meeting and I would appreciate your continued support and your chapter's vote when the election time comes this fall.

Even with my interest to run for reelection, anyone that would care to run for the office of Massachusetts State Representative is encouraged to do so. If interested, your intent to run and biography should be emailed to me no later than September 1, 2014.

I am dedicated to this position and the Red Knights, as well as all of you, and promise to continue keeping you informed. Together we work together to move forward to maintain the Massachusetts State Red Knights as the best state organization in the International Red Knights community.

There are no "political" issues currently involving our state or my position as your representative this year.

I am having problems contacting my Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles contact regarding Red Knights license plates. He doesn't seem to spend much time at his desk. If you are planning on requesting an RK plate for your bike the sooner you get your request to me the better. The process is taking a bit longer than normal.

Plates are only available to "Active" members and

more than one plate is allowed as long as the bike it is on is owned by and registered to an "active" member.

There is some talk at the International level of doing away with the Red Knights Forum (Message Boards) on the webpage. The Red Knights Forum is an excellent avenue for posting "wanted to buy" or "for sale" notices as well as a safe place to chat about topics of interest to all Red Knights. All registration applications are screened and the Forum has many layers of security to guard against "spamming". It is a safe place to post. Your support of the Forum would be appreciated. If you are already a member please use it. If you are not, please join.

MA-1 Charter / Life Member Norm Beausoleil is our new Region 1 Director. Norm and I have a very good relationship and I look forward to working with him. If you have any issue that you think should be brought up at the International Board meetings feel free to contact me and I will see that Norm is informed.

Your Assistant State Representative, Bob Laford of Mass-2, and I will continue to strive to keep Massachusetts on top. If you want our input or involvement, please ask. If you would like one of us to attend a chapter meeting, just ask. We are there to help you and your chapter.

If you have something you would like to see added or included within future newsletters feel free to send it to us for publication.

I hope you enjoy the newest offering from your state representatives.

Regards to all,

George Colby

Did you know that many Red Knights chapters make RKMC Merchandise available to other Red Knight members as a fund-raiser for their Chapter?

Chapters can submit what they are selling (yes, you do need a TMLA agreement with the International) to be posted on the International's web page so that other chapters know what you have for sale.

~~~~~

Some Red Knight paraphernalia that is being sold by Massachusetts chapters include:

- Guardian Bell, John Davies Last Alarm Sticker, and Firemans Prayer CD, (*Performed by Plainfolk is the music performed at the Memorial dedication*) through Mass-1
- Chapter window and helmet decals, and "Thin Red Line" decals through Mass-2
- RK Neck Warmers through Mass-3
- Chapter Specific Flag and Mount, RK 30 years Flag, RK Since 1982 Flag through Mass-4
- Red Knight belts through Mass-15

*If your chapter should be on this list, contact the International's Web Master so that your products can be listed... and contact Bob Laford so your information can be shared with other Mass Chapters!*

### An open letter from VT Association

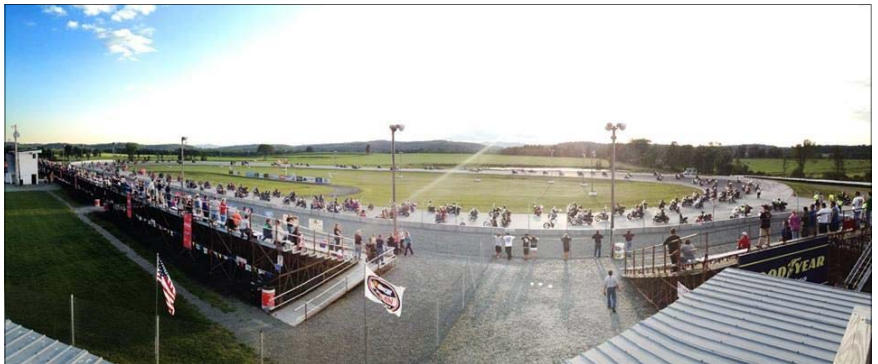
To All Members,

From the day of our very first convention committee meeting several years ago, it was determined that we were not hosting the convention as a "money maker" and no profit was ever intended. We were determined to host a successful convention and if we were fortunate enough to have any funds left after it's conclusion, we would give it to charity. Of course our first priority was to give back to the organization that we all love and cherish so very much, the Red Knights Motorcycle Club. We saw it as only fitting that the memorial be our first priority and the major beneficiary. We were also able to donate funds to our VT State Firefighters Academy and to the Barry Stires Memorial fund.

On behalf of the VT State Association, I can say without hesitation that it was our absolute pleasure hosting Convention 2013 here in Rutland, VT and we are very happy and proud that we could help, even just a little. Thank you for allowing us that opportunity.

Don Moore, President -RKMC VT Chapter 3  
VT State Assoc.

(The VT Association has also donated \$2000.00 to the Red Knights Memorial)



Red Knights ride around the Devil Bowl's Speedway during the RKMC Convention in Vermont



A regulation vehicle inspection in Massachusetts is a lot more than the "toot your horn" and get an inspection

sticker that many shops do each spring. The actual guide for giving motorcycle inspections is eleven pages long, but here are some bullet points of what is supposed to be inspected.

- All motorcycle inspection information will be uploaded to RMV via the Internet.
- Any mismatch of registration data will block the inspection from proceeding.
- Options of bike must be confirmed with listing on computer; -swing arm, -shocks, -odometer, -turn signals, -auxiliary lamps, -windshield
- The license plate must be mounted horizontally, and cannot be damaged.
- Exhaust (no modifications to baffles), must be no louder than with original equipment, ends of mufflers cannot be pinched.
- Handlebars, no higher than shoulder height, maximum 18 inch apart.
- Brakes have a list of requirements, and a visual inspection of brake pads must occur.
- Wheel bearing shall be inspected (on a lift) for excessive play.
- Front to rear wheel alignment shall be inspected.
- Steering head bearings shall be inspected for play with front wheel lifted off floor.

That is just a few highlights from the document. Other detailed inspection points are forks & suspension, tires & wheels, horn, lighting & reflectors, body components, frame, fuel system, engine & engine mounts, battery, and controls.

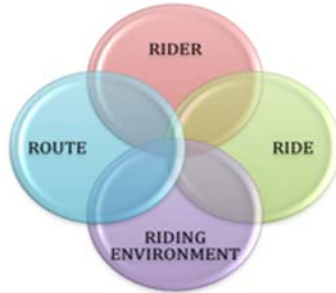
I don't know about you, but I do not think my fifteen minutes of time at the inspection station covered all those components closely. Is your bike ready for a true inspection?

## Know Your Riding Risk Factors

*(From RoadRunner Magazine)*

There are some similarities between the causes of plane crashes and the reasons for motorcycle accidents: it's often a combination of factors, or risks, that cause incidents in both cases. And in both, the fundamental cause can usually be traced back to "human error." Just as in doing a preflight check before flying your own airplane, a motorcyclist should take stock of his or her risk factors before their ride. Unlike the airline industry, which has many rules, regulations, and certifications in place to help prevent accidents, the motorcycle rider is pretty much on their own.

This Venn diagram shows one way of thinking about four fundamental categories of rider risk and how they can overlap to create even higher levels of accident risk to riders.



### **The Four Rs For Evaluating Motorcycle Riding Risk (Rider—Ride—Route—Riding Environment)**

**You, The Rider:** The question here is, are you physically and mentally prepared to ride safely? Here are some of the most important considerations:

Physically Fit? Physical impairments, like injuries or lack of sleep, will compromise alertness and safety.

Emotionally Fit? Riders should not be preoccupied with emotional distractions.

Chemically Unimpaired? It goes without saying that motorcycle riding and consumption of controlled substances is often a lethal combination. We should all cringe when we see a bunch of motorcycles parked outside of a bar. An ambulance should be on-site, like at racetracks, to pick up the pieces!

Wearing Proper Gear? Because the risks of motorcycling can be mitigated—but not eliminated—it's imperative that riders wear all their protective gear all the time. That includes a full-face helmet, proper boots and gloves, and riding jackets and pants with armor.

Have the Right Attitude? Riders should display a proper attitude, enjoying the ride, but doing so responsibly. Wheelies, stoppies, riding with legs draped over the handlebars, excessive speed, or other high-risk behaviors, inevitably, will lead (sooner or later) to a rider going down and endangering themselves and others.

### **Your Ride:**

Bike Mechanically Fit? Like the pilot who does a walk around of a plane before takeoff, riders should make sure their bike is ready to ride: properly inflated tires, turn signals and brake lights working, no obvious mechanical issues, etc.

Familiar Bike? When riding an unfamiliar bike, it may take at 30 minutes or more of riding before feeling "dialed in" and fully in control of the new motorcycle. It's important to take it easy and not push any limits until your confidence level is at 100 percent.

*(Continued next page)*

## **Making the Red Knights "International" in Massachusetts**

We had the great fortune to be part of the planning to welcome a group of European Red Knights as they passed through Massachusetts on their way to convention in Vermont this year.

It was an "All Massachusetts Day" with a ride to the Memorial in Boylston, and a large contingent of 35 Red Knight bikes weaving the roads of central Massachusetts with a stop at the Quabbin Tower and a BBQ put on by the New Salem Fire Department with over 60 people in attendance!



All great memories for us and our friends from Switzerland, Holland, and Luxemburg!

Thank you to everyone who planned and/or attended. It was a great day to share with other Red Knights!



*(Continued from page 3)*

**Visible to Others?** Are you riding a blacked-out bike (without reflectors or auxiliary lights) in black leathers, wearing a graphite color helmet at night? One of the leading causes of accidents is other motorists not seeing the motorcyclist. Be visible!

**Hauling Cargo?** If you will be hauling human or other cargo, the bike will handle differently: directional changes will be slower, braking distances will increase, and acceleration will be degraded. A slower responding bike requires adjustments to speed, following distances, and other similar riding considerations.

#### **Your Route:**

**Road Conditions/Hazards?** Bad pavement, tar snakes, pot holes, animals, poorly maintained railroad crossings, road debris, and plastic strips used to denote cross walks can all increase the risk of a crash. Speed and caution should be adjusted accordingly when these are present.

**Level of Difficulty?** If you've just gotten your motorcycle endorsement, riding technically demanding roads with steep elevation changes, switchbacks, and hairpin curves should be avoided until your skill level progresses to meet such demands. The Tail of the Dragon will still be there when you're ready for it.

**Services Available?** Riding in remote areas, where gas stations are few and far between and emergency medical service is not readily available, requires more planning and riding caution.

#### **Your Riding Environment:**

**Time of Day?** Riding into the sun, either in early morning or late evening, can severely limit a rider's ability to see where he or she is going and avoid hazards. I usually try not to ride at night, because my ability to see and be seen is greatly compromised. It's also at these times of day that deer and certain other members of the animal kingdom are most active, further increasing risk.

**Weather?** Fog, rain, snow, freezing temperatures, extreme heat, thunderstorms, and other types of severe weather pose a much greater threat to a motorcyclist's ability to avoid hazards and be visible to other motorists, not to mention the danger of being injured or killed by the severe weather itself.

**Traffic Congestion?** With drivers talking on cell phones, texting, trying to read while driving, and the myriad of other distractions available in the 21st century, the heightened exposure of riding in heavy traffic is pretty obvious. Because many of those other drivers may not be alert to your presence, riders have to be extra alert to the rapid-fire succession of threats developing around them.

If you start combining some of these hazards (and I'm sure you can add to the list), as illustrated by the areas of overlap in the Venn diagram, then it's apparent that your risk profile can increase dramatically. Riders should continuously assess their riding perils, both before and during the ride, so they can mitigate them. Sometimes, when the threat level is just too high, the best mitigation may be to just not ride.

This year's International convention was a record-breaker with 698 registered attendees, with representatives from 79 chapters in attendance representing seven countries (U.S., Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Luxembourg)!

Our Vermont hosts had plenty planned including a ride to the Vermont Fire Academy with a blessing of the bikes, a welcome BBQ, guided tours to the Vermont Teddy Bear Factory and the Cold Hollow Cider Mill. On Friday evening 310 bikes were escorted by Fire Apparatus and Police Vehicles to the Devil's Bowl Speedway where the Red Knights were allowed to ride around the track before enjoying a night at the races.

2013 was the first time that electronic balloting was used to decide the International Board elections. Tom Caisse of MA-4 shared statistical data that included the fact that only 39% of the chapters actually cast votes — meaning that 61% of the chapters were not represented in the balloting results (by their own choosing).

The certified results from Votenet Solutions were unsealed and read to the membership. Chris Gadway of Maryland was elected President, Leo Patry, from Ontario was reelected Treasurer, Norm Beausoleil, from Massachusetts was elected Region 1 Rep, Scott Ryan, Region 2, and Jeff Peters, Region 3.

Dave Emery was also presented a flag from Senator Leahy that had flown over the U.S. Capitol as a thank you for Dave's years of public service and his tenure as International President of the Red Knights.

Our Region 4 Director was appointed to fill the term of VP until next year's election and Joey Powel of North Carolina will fill the Region 4 role.

As always — the convention hosts did a fantastic job!





**C**ome join the the Red Knights on Sunday, May 18, 2014 for the Newton Veteran's Parade.

Each year the Red Knights are invited to lead this fun parade to celebrate all those who have served. **This year our Spring State RKMC Meeting corresponds with this parade...** meeting in the morning, parade in the afternoon.

Come participate in both events and have a Red Knight day, complete with ice cream!

| Region       | Chapters Eligible | Chapters Voted | Percent Return (%) |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1            | 85                | 33             | 39                 |
| 2            | 29                | 14             | 48                 |
| 3            | 70                | 21             | 30                 |
| 4            | 73                | 26             | 36                 |
| 5            | 21                | 5              | 24                 |
| 6            | 22                | 10             | 45                 |
| 7            | 21                | 17             | 81                 |
| Australia    | 9                 | 4              | 44                 |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>330</b>        | <b>130</b>     | <b>39</b>          |

2013 was the first year for electronic balloting for the Red Knights International. Organization-wide only 39% of eligible chapters casts ballots. If your chapter did not cast their ballot, your members voice was not heard. If your chapter did not cast a 2013 ballot, how can we help you and your chapter to ensure that your ballot is cast and your members' voice is heard with their vote?

**Sound:** The sensation perceived by the sense of hearing.

**Noise:** Any sound that is undesired or interferes with one's hearing of something.

We all like how a

motorcycle sounds. And if you are like me, when you hear a bike coming you probably turn to look at it (and smile). And there are also probably times that, like me, a loud, offensive, barking bike passes by and you cringe because its NOISE is actually painful to experience.

If we, as riders, see the negative points of excessive motorcycle sound, what do you think is the general public's view, who has no routine interaction with motorcycles and riders? What do you think their opinion of motorcyclists is after that obnoxious bike roars by?

We as riders need to be educated and concerned about how motorcycle noise affects our rights as riders. Around the country, and even here in Massachusetts, communities have passed noise ordinances and outright bans against motorcycles because of excessive motorcycle noise.

As part being an informed motorcyclist, the AMA recently made sound measuring kits available to motorcycle clubs through a grant program. Red Knights Mass-2 submitted a grant and received one of the units.

This unit is available at our events throughout the year. Please take advantage of this resource to see how your motorcycle compares to the noise limits in the Massachusetts General Law.

The bogus argument has always been "Loud pipes save lives." But *IF* the noise level of an approaching object is the best way to catch the attention of an inattentive driver, how come so many people are hit by trains each year?

## Coming Around On Sound

Riders Nationwide Are Stepping Up To Quiet Down Loud Bikes

**Red Knights Motorcycle Club, Mass., Chapter 2**

Robert Laford, chapter president, notes: "In Massachusetts we have over 400 members that this kit and education could be available for. Within southern New England, that number expands to about 900 members. I am a safety professional with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and have used equipment from my job for sound checks and related education for my Red Knight chapter members over the years. This type of equipment availability would allow me to offer similar resources to other Red Knights throughout our area."

"Each year the Massachusetts Red Knights gather twice a year for a state meeting. This would be a good venue to kick off a program that makes the equipment and related rider education available on the state level to other chapters," Laford says.

"For example, each year my chapter holds a 'Skills Day' to gather members and other interested riders together to talk about, and practice, rider safety," he says. "Other chapters could provide similar programs with the assistance of this equipment."

"This equipment would be made available to the chapters within Massachusetts and those nearby throughout southern New England. This equipment availability would not be restricted just to 2013, but be available through the life of the equipment," Laford says.

"Also, our Red Knights international convention is being held in Rutland, VT, in August 2013. Using the convention as a venue, the equipment and related education would be made available as a workshop in regards to sound levels and the noise challenge that faces the motorcycling community to members of the Red Knights from throughout North America and some international countries," he says.

"The desired outcome is to help educate riders on noise concerns and related regulatory and public relations problems that excessive noise creates. With the specific sound equipment the outcome would also be personalized for members of the Red Knights and other participating motorcyclists as to the sound levels of their motorcycles," Laford says.

44 [www.ama-assn.org](http://www.ama-assn.org)

The AMA did a feature article on their Sound Kit Grant program and listed the 12 recipients and information on how each group planned to make the equipment available to riders during the 2013 riding season. Red Knights of Massachusetts were a prominent piece of that article!



MA-4 President Tom Caisse and his wife Renee at the Convention. Tom was presented with an Outstanding Contribution Award at Convention Banquet



MA-1 Don Parker was receiving an Outstanding Contribution Award from International President Chris Gadway.



A local race team brought their car to the hotel to promote the "ride on the track ride". (Picture was taken before George realized it was a tight fit and he would have to be extricated by other Red Knights to get out).



Holiday Inn of Rutland Adorned in Red!



Our European guests in the tower in the Quabbin Park — and an international group of Red Knights pose outside the New Salem FD after the BBQ.

