**Transcript: Behind the Wheel: Motorcycling in Maine Part II (May 2021)**

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So we're Behind the Wheel and May is motorcycle awareness month. We're talking with John Kohler, Maine's motorcycle safety coordinator and as part of the discussion not only are we going to talk about some of the things that all of us as motorists can be aware of to recognize motorcycles but also just chatting about motorcycles as a whole in terms of two wheel and three wheel. You talked about differences in courses and we're beginning to see more three-wheel motorcycles out there.

The riding population in Maine and most states is uh we're getting older -- everybody's getting older every day -- and so there are more motorcyclists in the 50 to 60 and 60 to 70 year old category than in any other category and that's probably not going to change any time soon. So what the three wheeled motorcycle does is it removes the balance equation from riding a motorcycle. You don't have to worry about balance you have to worry about strength in your legs and it probably keeps somebody who would give up riding motorcycles because of those reasons, keeps them in the saddle a little bit longer to enjoy riding.

Are you still using all of your limbs and controlling the three wheel?

You are for the most part, it depends on the three-wheeler because now they've made a lot of advances where some of the stuff some of these three-wheelers are automatic some are semi-automatic some are completely automatic or you could still get one with conventional motorcycle controls. But you know the turning is totally different; you don't lean a three-wheeler you lean your body a little bit but you don't lean the three-wheeler doesn't lean.

These courses that you talked about how do we get more information about where they're offered, when they're offered, what they cost?

The Bureau of Motor Vehicles has a website and all that information all the schools. We have eight private schools offering this training at 12 different locations throughout the state from Biddeford to Presque Isle, from Jonesboro to Wilton and all that information is on the BMV website: the different schools with their phone numbers and website addresses and everything.

How long is the course?

Two days for either course basically and the three wheeler now with our law change if you take the course on a three-wheeler you're limited to riding three-wheelers. If you take it on a two-wheel motorcycle you can ride two-wheel or three-wheel and so it's the same thing if you take the road test on a three-wheel you're limited to the restriction of a three wheel.

And you mentioned when you were discussing the turning aspect of the three wheel versus the two wheel -- talk a little bit more about that.

A two-wheel motorcycle is uh is you go around a curve with a two-wheel motorcycle by leaning the motorcycle it's called counter steering where you're actually turning the handlebars a little bit in the opposite direction to initiate that lean okay so that that's how we lean a motorcycle it's called counter steering. So when you see motorcycles leaned over that's how they got there. A three wheeler doesn't lean like that so uh the motorcyclist moves their body to the inside and tries to keep their chin over the handle grips and leans their body weight um and uses it using that push-pull steering we call it within a three-wheeler.

So even someone who may have a motorcycle endorsement for a two-wheeler, there are some strategies that are really needed for the three-wheeler that would be different?

Yes absolutely a little different not not uh you know not insurmountable but they operate a little bit different. The test the the knowledge test we have for these two courses is just a little bit different for those reasons.

*Thanks for listening to this episode of Behind the Wheel a production of the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles in collaboration with Secretary of State Shenna Bellows. For more information on a variety of motor vehicle topics visit our webpage at maine.gov/sos/bmv*