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 Keep It On the Black Stuff

Is a CBT enough to ensure novice rider safety?

While Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) is the legal standard for riding a moped or motorcycle on UK roads, novice riders must surely ask themselves if a course starting with the word 'compulsory' is enough.

Unlike the lengthy training that is required of car drivers, CBT is generally just a one-day course! However, where candidates are not meeting the required standards and not considered safe to ride unaccompanied, the duration of training should be extended.

Putting this in context – according to the BBC, it takes 45 hours of on-road lessons to pass a car driving test and that's in a vehicle with air bags, seat belts and crash protection.

By contrast – via CBT, a novice motorcycle rider can be legally on the road within just five hours – of which just two hours is spent participating in road-based instruction. That's just 10% of the education required of novice car drivers!

People shout about the relative cheapness of getting on two wheels – five hours of instruction versus 45 hours for a car driver, brings the instructional costs alone to a saving of £1250 – but when it's your life that's

on the line, is this the wrong message or an opportunity to invest in higher levels of motorcycle training?

Compulsory is a world apart from adequate!

Don't read me wrong, since the introduction of CBT in 1990, there has been a significant reduction in our accident rates and CBT, when delivered well, is designed to ensure minimum levels of rider skills and road safety. That said, after 25 years

helping people to realise their two-wheeled ambitions, I'm not a big advocate of minimum standards. I strongly encourage all novice motorcyclists to recognise that 'compulsory' is a world apart from 'adequate' and to invest in a further day or two with a good motorcycle training school.

If there is a need for novice car drivers to invest in pass-plus, surely it makes sense for the UK's most vulnerable road users to take

personal responsibility for their own post-CBT skills enhancement.

What does CBT allow a novice rider to do?

On successful completion of CBT, a DL196 Compulsory Basic Training certificate (valid for two years) is issued by the instructor. A novice rider can then ride unaccompanied, but without pillion passengers and not on the motorway. Post-CBT, new riders must display L-plates (D-plates



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in Wales) on the front and rear of their machine. These cannot be removed until motorcycle theory, Module 1 and Module 2 tests have all been passed. With a valid CBT, at 16 years of age, a learner can ride a moped and if 17 years or over, a motorcycle up to 125cc with a power output of no more than 11kW.

What does CBT involve?

While CBT follows a syllabus, most ATBs will deliver the course per individual learning needs. Also important is the instructor to student ratio, with the most common being two students per instructor.

ELEMENT A (Introduction)

Element A is a course introduction that covers what a novice rider should expect, along with information about motorcycle clothing, general safety and rider comfort.

ELEMENT B

(Practical on-site training)

Element B runs through an introduction to the motorcycle

controls and how they work, along with manual handling and the essential motorcycle safety checks.

ELEMENT C

(Practical on-site riding)

Element C moves on to cover off-road practical riding instruction, where riders are taught how to ride the motorbike within the relative safety of an off-road training area. Candidates learn how to use 'slow control' during a variety of practical exercises, along with instruction on gears, brakes, observations and junctions.

ELEMENT D

(Practical on-road training preparation)

Element D, which is usually classroom based includes a basic briefing on the Highway Code, plus advice on the importance of staying visible on the road, information on defensive riding and a general overview of what can be expected while riding on the road.

ELEMENT E

(Practical on-road riding)

Element E is the on-road part of

CBT and takes the form of at least a two-hour road-ride, where candidates will experience a wide variety of different roads, junctions and traffic conditions.

Students must demonstrate a good understanding and practical skills to progress and if a learner does not achieve the desired standard during Element C they will not progress to riding on the road. Where there are areas of weakness during Element E, candidates will require more instruction before a CBT DL196 certificate can be issued.

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Images: VideoBiker.co.uk



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