



STATEMENT OF POLICY

by the International Road Federation

“Cable Barriers and Motorcycle Safety”

July 1, 2011

Although the International Road Federation Washington (IRF) has not conducted its own investigation, the IRF has reviewed and now endorses the Resolution on Traffic Barrier Ends “END Turned-Down ENDS” that was approved by the Transportation Research Board’s AFB20(2) Roadside Safety Subcommittee on International Research Activities on January 24, 2011. The resolution is shown below:

Longitudinal barriers are doing an excellent job protecting motorists from roadside hazards. However, due to the lesser degree of crash protection inherent in motorcycle use, longitudinal barriers may present a greater risk of injury to motorcyclists impacting the face of a steel beam or cable guardrail as well as, concrete parapets, depending on the speed and angle of the impact event. Motorcycle fatalities or serious injuries can occur when a fallen motorcyclist leaves the motorcycle and contacts the roadway surface or when he or she slides into a nearby concrete barrier or steel barrier system and strikes the barrier, including the steel beams, cables and support posts. Riders who drive into a barrier can also be injured as they slide along the top of barrier.

The Transportation Research Board’s AFB20(2) Roadside Safety Design Subcommittee on International Research agrees that potentially all barriers could represent a greater risk of injury to motorcyclists than to other motorists, AFB20(2) also supports both the quantification of this risk and efforts by safety barrier manufacturers to develop systems that can lessen the risk and the severity of injuries to motorcyclists who come into contact with these devices while continuing to provide devices that perform safely for other motor vehicles.

Safety products are available to reduce the likelihood of impacts or reduce the severity of impacts between fallen motorcyclists and support posts used in steel beam and cable longitudinal barriers. The AFB20(2) Roadside Safety Design Subcommittee on International Research recommends that road authorities consider the use of these products at sites that have a history of motorcycle accidents and where such products would be a cost effective method to reduce the risk of serious injury when riders impact barrier posts. The AFB20(2) Subcommittee supports the recommendations in the EuroRAP document: "Barriers to Change: Designing Safe Roads for Motorcyclists" in particular the summary statement on page 13 that states "The Panel concludes that, despite the amount of high profile coverage that wire rope barriers have attracted, limited research does not warrant the inference that they are more or less dangerous than other types of barrier on the market.

The AFB20(2) Subcommittee supports the initiative to conduct further research through NCHRP Project 22-26. The subcommittee also supports efforts under way in Europe to include aspects of motorcyclist protection in the current CEN testing standards.