

INDUSTRY WATCH

Motorcycle & Moped Industry Council (MMIC)
Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV)
By Jo-Anne Farquhar

In spite of a general economic downturn, the Motorcycle and Moped Industry Council (MMIC) reported that at the end of December 2008, motorcycle and scooter sales in Canada were up over 8 percent year-to-date. Unfortunately, industry can't boast those same numbers for 2009. Soggy weather, a 13% reduction in fuel prices and the ripple effect of economic turmoil has impacted sales in Canada. On-road motorcycle & scooter first quarter sales dropped as much as minus -56%, with spring 2009 recording better results at minus -21% in retail sales. At the time this article was written third quarter and into the fourth quarter year-to-date sales for 2009 were holding stable at minus -27%.

Minus -27%! Since when in retail sales are negative numbers something to breathe easier about? Considering earlier market reports, the latest numbers tell us that trends are slowly moving in the right direction. The important thing is keep this trend moving forward.

So this is where the MMIC comes in. Since its member companies account for over 90 percent of all the new motorcycles and scooters sold in Canada, it's even more important for MMIC to work with policy makers in developing supporting measures that will assist in maintaining viability in this sector.

One such initiative being pursued by the MMIC is the implementation of a sensible solution to identify noisy motorcycle exhaust systems. With MMIC funding support, the Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) and the Society of Automotive Engineers in the USA conducted extensive sound testing procedures which resulted in the establishment of the SAE J 2825 sound test.

Once introduced, a very active working committee was established through the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administration (CCMTA), an organization composed of provincial and federal government representation, which coordinate all matters dealing with administration, regulations and control of motor vehicle transportation and road safety. This specific committee is comprised of the motorcycle industry, rider associations, law enforcement, motor vehicle administrators and legal services.

Following the MMIC presentation on the SAE J2825 at its spring 2009 meeting, the CCMTA adopted a testing protocol which enabled sound noise testing to be performed across Canada during the summer and fall 2009. The exhaust noise test was conducted on over 200 motorcycles in four provinces, Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The Edmonton and Calgary Police, who were very actively involved in the testing process, prepared a video to

illustrate the motorcycle noise testing standard and showed how simple it was to conduct this test using a sound meter, calibrator and portable tachometer. The great thing about this test is it takes less than a minute to perform and immediately identifies excessively noisy vehicles.

Taking these test results, the CCMTA committee started work to establish key elements that must be included in a model law with the likelihood that a draft model will be ready for review and discussion in early spring 2010.

What will this law do for riders, manufacturers and dealerships? It's just one more step in a long process of developing a standard that enables law enforcement officers to measure noise emissions on-the-spot accurately, easily and quickly with the results that riders will no longer be subjected to questionable sound-level checks. On a national level, it would eliminate a lot of the confusion and frustration for motorcyclists when they ride through different jurisdictions.

It's important to remember that all new motorcycles brought into Canada must respect federal noise emission standards. The MMIC member company bikes are in compliance with federal guidelines and would pass SAE J2825 roadside tests. In fact, of the over 200 motorcycles tested during the summer and fall of 2009, all bikes with stock exhaust systems passed with no exceptions. This is one more opportunity to improve the image of the sport since using the SAE J2825 test will make it easier for law enforcement to identify excessively loud motorcycles.

The MMIC, its member manufacturers and distributors recommend the new SAE J2825 stationary sound test procedure for on-highway motorcycles and encourage the implementation of these standards across Canada. Being proactive and leading the way with safe and accommodating new policies such as implementation of the SAE J2825, allow motorcycles and scooters to reach their full potential. This is just one more positive step in supporting industry in these economically uncertain times.

For further information check out the MMIC website at www.mmic.ca

Jo-Anne Farquhar is the Director of Communications & Public Affairs for the Motorcycle & Moped Industry Council (MMIC) and the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV) and can be reached at 416-491-4449 or toll-free at 877.470.2288 or by email at jfarquhar@cohv.ca or jfarquhar@mmic.ca.