

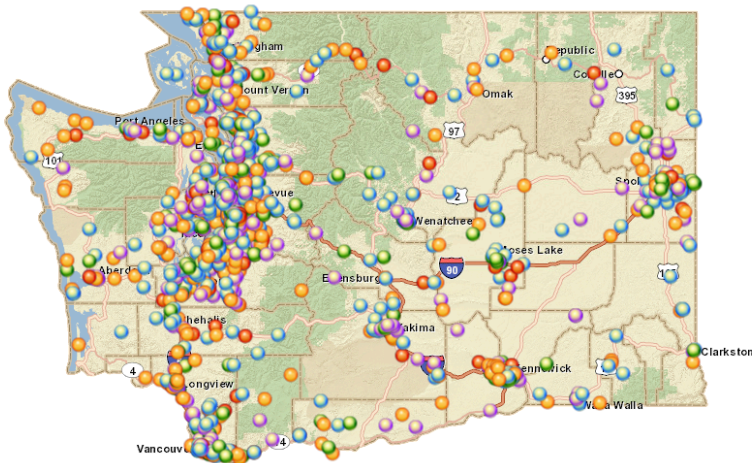
Public Health (and Relations) Crisis

The concept of public health has really expanded. It used to focus on disease. Now it includes things like gun deaths.

New York's Governor recently declared a gun violence disaster emergency. This new strategy treats gun violence as a public health crisis.

We have a public health crisis of our own in Washington. It doesn't have anything to do with guns. Or COVID-19. It has to do with motorcycles.

Here's a map showing the 1,658 motorcycle wrecks in Washington last year:



Far too many motorcyclists are getting hurt. Motorcycles represent 3 percent of the vehicles on the road. But motorcycles are involved in 15 percent of fatal crashes.

Motorcycle safety has become a public health crisis. Failure to address it is just as bad—if not worse—than a totalitarian enactment. I agree 100 percent with Scott that we should expand our reach to deal with this

significant issue that's affecting so many riders and their families.

I also think it's important that we put ourselves in the position of playing offense rather than defense.

A huge number of these wrecks are single vehicle (rider loses control and goes off roadway or lays down motorcycle). And we've seen a spike in the last year or two of collisions where the motorcyclist rear-ends another vehicle.

In order to play offense we need to cut down the number of wrecks that are caused by motorcyclists. Otherwise the State will continue to view this as a problem riders are creating for themselves. That means adopting a culture of zero-tolerance for impaired and distracted riding. It also means that we need to start thinking about how to make training more accessible to new riders and reduce the stigma associated with continuing training for more experienced riders.



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