

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF ACCIDENT RECONSTRUCTION SPECIALISTS

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Schedule of ACTAR Accreditation Examinations

There's no better way to demonstrate your qualifications as a reconstruction professional. The following is a list showing upcoming test dates and locations, so you too can earn your accreditation.

Date	Location
July 18, 2004	Phoenix, AZ
July 24, 2004	Hillsboro, OR
July 25, 2004	Biloxi, MS
August 22, 2004	Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada
October 5, 2004	Ocean City, MD
October 6, 2004	Santa Rosa, CA

You may contact Al Baxter, ACTAR Administrator, at the address below or by phone at (800) 809-3818.

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Mini-motorcycles and "Pocket Bikes"

By Kent E. Boots, Kent E. Boots &
Associates
Orange County Sheriff's Department/
M.A.R.T.

In recent months manufacturers have begun making mini-motorcycles and "pocket bikes". They are being marketed for outdoor recreation. For the purposes of a traffic collision report they are considered vehicles.

With the increase in the number of these types of vehicles appearing on the roadways, some confusion has risen regarding their legal status. The gas powered "pocket bikes" fall under the definition of a *motor driven cycle*, because of the engine size is less than 150 cubic centimeters.¹ The operator is required to have a Class M1 motorcycle endorsement.²

Some of the "pocket bikes" such as the one pictured below are powered by electric motors. These would fall under the definition of a motorized bicycle or moped as long as the maximum speed is not more than 30 mile per hour on a level surface.³ The operator is required to have a Class M2 motorcycle endorsement.⁴

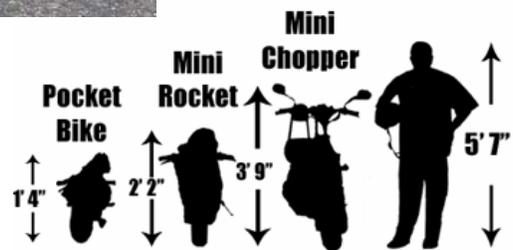
In both cases the vehicle is required to be registered, have insurance, and have all required equipment applicable to a motorcycle. VC 12500(b) applies to motorcycles, motor driven cycles, and motorized bicycles.

I recently contacted DMV legal in Sacramento as well as the local CHP office. The DMV's legal opinion and CHP's opinion is that the "pocket bikes" fall under

VC 405, motor-driven cycle (motorcycle). They also concur with the CDL, insurance, and registration requirements in order for the vehicles to be operated on public roadways.

DMV policy is not to register any vehicles that have an engine size of 50cc or less. So as it stands right now, it is not possible for the vehicles to be legally operated on public roadways. DMV legal says that we can expect some new legislation next year, which specifically addresses these types of motorcycles.

In the mean time the rider can be cited for VC12500(b) if they don't have a motorcycle endorsement or VC 12500(a) if they are unlicensed. They can also be cited for VC 4000(a)(1) and VC 16020(a). They can also be cited for VC 24002(b) if the vehicle is not properly equipped as required.



¹ VC 405

² VC 12804.9(g)(4)

³ VC 406(a)

⁴ VC 12804.9(g)(5)

1st Annual CAARS Cruise report

Jim Holder, Director at Large

Well the first annual CAARS cruise went off without a hitch. We were able to board the ship early on Friday, which was very nice and helped to avoid the crowds getting on-board. Once aboard, a leisurely buffet lunch on deck was in order before the first part of the training presented by Alan Coulter and Wesley VanDiver. After covering the first couple hours of training, it was back on deck in time for the ship to set sail. After that it was drinks with the other CAARS members in the bar, then a lobster dinner.

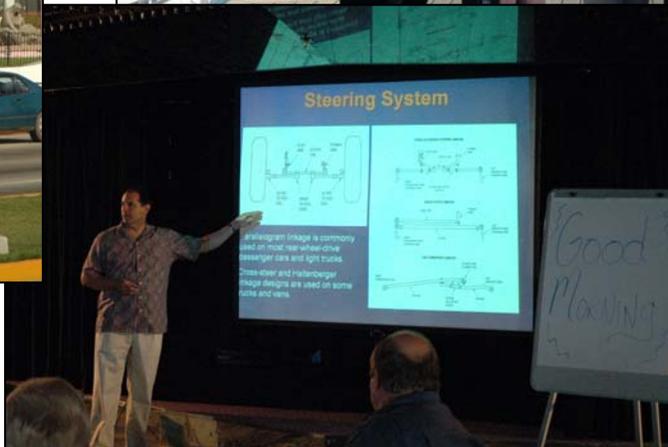
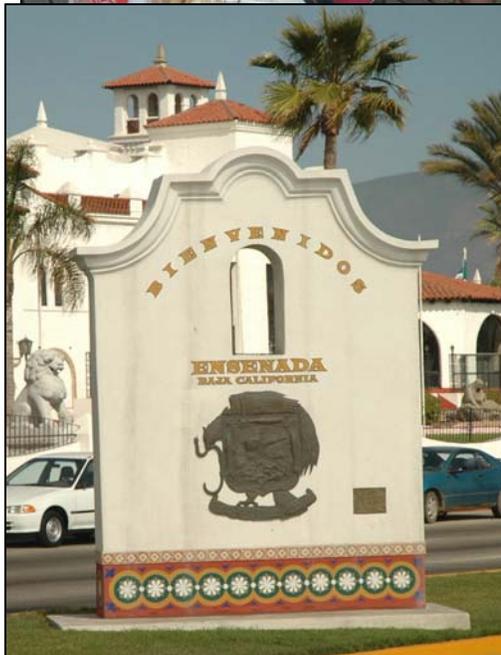
Saturday morning we awoke in Ensenada. Some members of our group chose to relax onboard the ship while others went shopping in Ensenada or went on a tour of the local vineyards and wineries. Then it was back aboard the ship for a formal dinner in the main dining room for those interested, or a more relaxed buffet dinner for those not wanting to dress up. After dinner, a little dancing, gambling, a show or just plain relaxing talking with friends new and old was in order.

Sunday was a day at sea. CAARS members attended the second half of the training in the morning, and then spent the rest of the day as they wished. Several members, including yours truly, spent hours just sitting on deck drinking fruity drinks with umbrellas in them and discussing everything from the weather to collision reconstruction to the best vacation spots. Very relaxing and great networking!

The training was excellent and all who attended had a great time. A huge thank you to CAARS Director Karen Haverkamp for all of her hard work in organizing the cruise. We hope you all can join us on the 2005 CAARS cruise, so start planning for it now!



Clockwise from above: the CAARS cruise crew, CAARS members and directors hanging out on deck, Alan Coulter during his presentation, Ensenada Mexico, CAARS members and spouses relaxing on the pool deck.



Post-Collision Passenger Vehicle Inspection

By Alan J. Coulter, Coulter & Associates
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Most of us take an automobile for granted. As long as the vehicle is standing on what appears to be four inflated tires we're good to go. With today's sophisticated automobiles, most components that comprise the throttle, steering and service brake systems seem to be fail-safe and trouble-free for the life of the vehicle. However, it is those very same components and systems that are alleged to be the cause of most accidents today, "my throttle stuck", "my steering failed", "my brakes went out". As a traffic accident investigator/reconstructionist it is your responsibility to evaluate all aspects of the collision. Too many times we have all seen individuals rush to formulate an opinion and/or a conclusion as to what happened, it may have been yourself early in your career, I am sure that I have been guilty of it (once).

How many of you have had an opportunity to be on the receiving end of the question attorneys so love – "Mr. -----, is it possible". Sure it's possible, anything is possible! However, hopefully we have all learned that if we had asked that question of ourselves early on in an investigation we would have the answer to that compelling question. By being prepared for that question you are defining your expertise by demonstrating your investigative knowledge and thoroughness, even for the simplest of possibilities.

So is it possible that a "throttle sticks" or that the "steering failed" or even that "brakes go out" sure it is. How many times have you examined the scene of the traffic collision, or reviewed the report itself and determined things just do not add up based upon the physical evidence or lack of it. What about witness and party statements? Did the driver state that the red brake lamp and/or the amber ABS lamp were illuminated? Did the driver ever make a statement of applying the brakes? Did any witness see brake lamps illuminate and/or hear anything that resembled tires skidding? Did anyone hear

something and/or feel something prior to the collision? The information obtained in those statements could identify a possible deficiency such as, a complaint of hard or loose steering or vibrations. Equally important is the lack of physical evidence, such as the absence of braking.

With all that information in hand we have determined that a mechanical inspection of the vehicle is necessary. But, before we tear into this like a NASCAR pit crew we need to understand the reasons for a mechanical inspection. The purpose of the inspection is to determine the pre- and post-collision state of the vehicle by identifying any mechanical factor(s) that would have contributed to or may have caused the collision. Additionally, we need to rule out or verify any possible mechanical deficiencies with the vehicle and provide additional support for a Primary Collision Factor. For those of you doing performance type calculations, don't you think it is important to have knowledge of the vehicle's mechanical condition, such as its ability to accelerate, maneuver and brake.

To begin, we must first have a methodology. Review the traffic collision report if available including any and all physical evidence. Prior to inspecting the vehicle, determine if there are any service bulletins, defect investigations and/or recalls. I would suggest starting at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/>. Once there in pit row, document the vehicle condition prior to and at the completion of the inspection. Remember to document your observations, both in writing and with photographs. Conduct the inspection systematically, starting on the outside and working your way back into the interior, inspecting each individual system in its entirety. Only after you have completed the inspection of the entire system should a functionality test be conducted if possible.

While you are conducting the inspection, remember to observe the surrounding components. As you inspect the suspension, is there evidence of frequent bottoming out on the under carriage, which could be a symptom of reduced ride height due to sagging springs. Could the sagging springs affect the

handling and stability of the vehicle? Remember the complaint of hard or loose steering or vibrations? Those conditions are not always due to steering gear or pump problems, but often are related to such factors as low tire pressure and/or front-end alignment.

Let's say the vehicle you are inspecting is suspected of having brake problems. The investigating officer provides written information that the vehicle had just been picked up at a tire store after having a right-rear tire puncture repaired. The report; however, contains no documentation of any braking prior to the vehicle entering an intersection and hit broadside, inflicting minor injuries to the driver. Additionally, there is no statement from the driver as to what happened. During the inspection you documented that the brake assemblies on the rear axle were inoperative. Having identified the deficiency we must now determine if the condition was preexisting, occurred during the traffic collision sequence or was it post-collision recovery/towing damage.

Remember, the purpose of the inspection was to "document the pre-collision and post-collision condition(s) of the vehicle and to identify any mechanical factor(s) that would have *contributed to* or *may have caused the traffic collision.*" Do we have a mechanical deficiency that could have *contributed to* or *may have caused the traffic collision*? Sure we do; however, let's not get ahead of ourselves. During your inspection you note that the area surrounding the damaged brake line contains four minor indentations. The brake line itself is flattened in a uniform appearance, having a width of approximately six inches. You read in the report that the vehicle had just been picked up after having had a tire repaired. Having located the repair facility and interviewing the mechanic as to what work was completed and the equipment used, you have concluded that the damaged brake line was the result of a misplaced floor jack. The four minor indentations were a result of the jacking pad itself.

You conclude that the damaged brake line was a preexisting condition, evidenced by the damage

itself and the lack of any physical evidence of braking at the scene of the traffic collision. Furthermore, this preexisting deficiency was the cause of the traffic collision. Case closed! Right? Not yet, could the possibility exist that the driver never applied the brakes and just failed to see the stop sign? Wouldn't the lack of physical evidence support that opposing opinion? If the driver never applied the brakes, would the deficiency have contributed to or have caused the traffic collision? Remember, a mechanical inspection is only one part of a thorough traffic collision investigation.

So "Mr. -----, is it possible...?"

CRASH!

If anyone has an interesting collision reconstruction related photograph that could be published in a future issue of Skidmarks, please forward it to Jim Holder at jamesh@ci.garden-grove.ca.us



We don't know the whole story to go with this photograph, but the vehicle is a Dodge Neon, the horse was uninjured and as you can see is still in the trailer.

Blurbs from the Board



Gordon Gray
Chair



Kent Boots
Vice Chair



Bill Focha
Director



Karen Haverkamp
Director



Jim Holder
Director



Chris Kauderer
Director



Richard Shin
Director



Rudy Degger
ACTAR Rep.



Kevin Cassidy
Membership Chair

Greetings to all! We've completed our last two Spring Quarterly Trainings; I'd like to convey my gratitude to those persons responsible for these training sessions. I'll start with our April Training Cruise; unfortunately because of obligations at work I was unable to attend. I've heard the reports and they have all been exceptionally positive. This was a first for CA²RS but from the response I've received I don't believe it will be our last. Change is good! Thanks to Board member, Karen Haverkamp for all her hard work and planning that went into this very successful training event. Our Northern California training for this same topic was hosted by the Vallejo Police Department, with the assistance of Sgt. Robert Lee. Board member Bill Focha synchronized this event with about 30 members in attendance. The presenters for both of these training sessions, Alan Coulter and Wesley VanDiver did a magnificent job presenting Post Collision Passenger Vehicle Inspections. Thanks to Vice Chairperson, Kent Boots for arranging these two dynamic and highly motivated members to share their experience on this topic.

July/August Training: Our next training topic is "Momentum Review". The Northern training will be held in Stockton at the Radisson Hotel on July 28th with the Southern training on August 18th at the Anaheim Sheraton. Our presenter is Rudy Degger (ACTAR), from Rudy Degger and Associates, Inc. This training will be an excellent precursor for anyone thinking about taking the ACTAR exam before the Conference in October, or a first-rate refresher to sharpen some of those perishable skills. The most important part of this training is we are asking everyone planning to attend to let us know you are coming in advance. By reserving your spot you will be guaranteed to receive a copy of the handout material. This will be a hands-on training session with a case review to include CAD drawings. ***We are only going to print enough handout materials for those who pre-register, so register early!*** Included in the handout material will be training aids, drawings, photographs,

and a CD with all of the info for those of you who like to use your computer.

Speaking of the Conference the dates and location have been chosen. Mark your calendars! We'll be heading for the wine country, Santa Rosa in the lovely Sonoma Valley, October 28th – 30th at the Flamingo Resort Hotel & Conference Center in the heart of the beautiful Sonoma Wine Country. The hotel is located at 2777 Fourth Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95495. I'll have more information very soon. Some of the pre-conference activities will include an ACTAR Test the day before on the 27th. We are looking into the possibility of hosting an ACTAR prep class the day before the test. If you are interested in this prep class please contact Board member Chris Kauderer for more information.

Our theme this year will center on Motorcycles. Our featured speaker is Al Baxter along with a host of others. We are planning live crash testing; we are looking for volunteers to ride the motorcycle into the side of stationary target vehicles. If you are interested in a short-lived stunt career please contact me. All kidding aside we are looking for rolling motorcycles we can deliver into the side of a target vehicle. If you have any contacts at your local tow companies who would be will to donate a motorcycle or two we'd welcome your assistance. Please contact Board member Bill Focha for details. We will even take care of disposing of the vehicles when our testing is accomplished.

Additional Conference items will include: *Exhibitor Displays & Reception: * Continental Breakfasts * Catered Lunches * Evening Reception *Conference Discounts: * CA²RS Member discounts for the ACTAR exam fee *

Dues Renewal: It's also dues time! Keep an eye out for your dues renewal notices coming to a mailbox near you. Remember there will be a drawing of 5 free conference attendees from all of those members who get their dues

paid and received at CA²RS Headquarters before the drawing dead line of July 1st.

Elections: Have you ever dreamed of going in to politics? Does the idea of having a “say” in how things are done and representing your voting members sound appealing? Then it’s not too early to start thinking about the Board member elections that will take place at the Fall Conference in October. Let this be your stepping-stone to higher office! There are three Board positions up for election this year, the Board seats of **James Holder** and **Karen Haverkamp** as well as my position of Chairman. I’d like to encourage anyone who feels they can contribute to the growth and direction of the association to put their name on the ballot. Talk to your Board members and see what’s involved. You can make many worthwhile contacts and have the opportunity to help organize training for your fellow members. If you’d like to put a “candidate’s statement” into the “Skidmark” prior to the election, it can be arranged.

Lastly, I'd like to once again encourage anyone who has ideas for future training meetings to contact one of the Board members and pass it on. We're also looking for meeting places in both Northern and Southern California areas. In considering a meeting place, we take into account the number of members in the area and the ease of commuting to the location at the time the training is offered. In this way we can be assured of maximum attendance.

As always, the Board welcomes any suggestions regarding future training topics or how to improve the organization.

Gordon Gray
CA²RS Chair

From CA²RS Headquarters Administration

Dues notices are in the mail for those of you whose memberships expire at the end of June, 2004. Please review the database printout that’s being sent with the notice for any errors and make any changes on the form before sending it back with your dues check. If you’ve made any changes via the website in the past month, they may not be reflected on these printouts.

Also, now that the website database is controlled directly from CA²RS HQ, it is easier to have one address for the website and another for any CA²RS mailings. Some of you who would prefer to not have your home address on the website but do not want membership information sent to your department will benefit from this.

If you need to make changes such as these, or wish to gain access to or change your username on the website, simply send me an email directly at kc2938@pacbell.net or via CAARS@hotmail.com. – Kevin Cassidy

Training Dates for 2004

Dates	Locations	Contact	Topics
July 28 th , 2004	Radisson Hotel 2323 Grand Canal Blvd Stockton, CA 95207	Gordon Gray 209-937-7292 Gordon.gray@ci.stockton.ca.us	Momentum Review – Case Study
August 18 th , 2004	Anaheim Sheraton 900 S. Disneyland Drive Anaheim, CA	Richard Shin 714-245-8214 rshin@ci.santa-ana.ca.us	Momentum Review – Case Study
October 28 th , 29 th and 30 th , 2004	Santa Rosa, CA	More information will be available soon.	Annual Conference – Focus: Motorcycle collisions

Check the website for additional information and updates. 