

# Dirt bikers under watch



Dirt bikes would be regulated with new rules that will be announced soon, such as mandatory registration of bikes and using of safety gear (File Photo)

## Strict action against violators mooted

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**A**uthorities are intensifying their efforts to curb illegal dirt bike activities during the coming camping season, it has been confirmed yesterday.

Following the recurrence of fatal accidents due to the reckless use of dirt bikes in Sakhir camping area during the previous years, a new regulation has been proposed to tighten the state's grip on bikers during the camping season. This was announced during a Press conference held yesterday by the Supreme Camping Committee, headed by Southern Governorate Governor Shaikh Abdulla bin Rashid Al Khalifa.

Shaikh Abdulla confirmed to *DT News* that "an administrative decision to regulate the use of dirt bikes in camping areas has been referred by the committee to Interior Minister Lieutenant General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa for approval."



(From left) Mr. Al Sisi, Mr. Abdulatif, Shaikh Abdulla and Colonel Al Dossary at the Press conference yesterday

The Governor informed that using dirt bikes on public roads is prohibited. He said that the new regulation stipulates wearing safety gear while riding, in addition to registering the bikes, in order to avoid risking lives through police chases of violators.

"The highest percentages of fatal accidents during the previous camping season were related to this kind of bikes," he commented.

Southern Governorate Police Directorate

Representative Colonel Isa Thamer Al Dossary stated that more policemen will be deployed in the camping area.

He announced that more undercover policemen, as well as men in uniform will be present to ensure order and security at the camping sites, especially during special occasions, such as National Day and New Year's eve.

The colonel added that the decision to increase the numbers of security personnel followed a slight increase in crime rates during the previous camping seasons.

### Season for Family

During the conference, Shaikh Abdulla affirmed that "the camping season is mainly dedicated to families and most camping areas were allocated to them."

The camping area this year is measured to be around 50 square kilometres and each camp is allocated a land not exceeding 900 square metres.

He vowed that any violators would be held accountable before the law.

He said violations include loud speakers and immoral activities. He revealed that camps that violated the rules were removed during the last couple of years.

He called upon all campers to adhere to the announced rules and regulations that are set to ensure their safety.

### Mandatory Insurance

The officials added that imposing a refundable BD50 insurance fee on each camp contributed in limiting violations and raising more awareness among campers.

Shaikh Abdulla said: "This is the third year since we implemented the insurance system. Since then, it was noticed that campers are more concerned about abiding by the regulations, preserving the environment and maintaining cleanliness of the surrounding areas."

### Advanced Technologies

The officials at the conference announced that this year, campers could

register online. Registration can also be done through a newly-launched app for smart devices that provide campers with a variety of services.

Southern Governorate Investment Development Director and Campers Centre President Mohammed Al Sisi said the app is a prototype and a final version would be released in the next camping season 2016-2017.

The app allows campers to register, reserve desired areas for camping using GPS coordinates and report accidents.

### Cleaning Efforts

Southern Area Municipality Director Asim bin Abdulatif Abdulla spoke about the efforts of the municipality in maintaining a hygiene and tidy camping season.

"The numbers of cleaners have been increased to 30 workers. More machinery and equipment have been added to the existing ones. We will have four trucks and two pressing machines. Recycling waste bins will also be placed in

different areas," he confirmed.

"Waste violations have decreased by 25% due to the newly-imposed insurance system and the increased awareness the public gained," the Director said.

### Best Camp Award

Shaikh Abdulla confirmed the continuation of Nasser bin Hamad Weekly Best Camp Award, which he said contributed in improving the camping season during the previous years.

It was also declared that this year the award would be reintroduced with new criteria, making it easier for campers to take part in it.

### Registration made easy

Committee members explained the steps to register, through a presentation that was displayed during the conference. The season begins on October 22 and ends on March 5. However, registration is open from October 8.

Applicants should be above 21 years old. They should choose the spot they desire to set up their camp using GPS coordinates. Then, a form should be filled with the details of the applicant and the camp after paying the insurance fees of BD50, which will be refunded within a month's time after the camping season ends. Posters would be given to applicants who are requested to post on a visible spot outside their camps. Posters should be returned in order to redeem the insurance amount.

