



Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month

2005

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH Fact Sheet & Talking Points

STATISTICS:

- In 2004, 3,927 motorcyclists were killed and an additional 76,000 were injured in traffic crashes in the United States. Motorcycle fatalities increased each year between 1997 and 2004, with a total increase of 1,811, or over 85 percent.
- About 60 percent of the projected increase in motorcyclist fatalities in 2004 are expected to be in the 40-and-over age groups.
- Nearly one out of four motorcycle operators (24 %) involved in fatal crashes in 2003 were operating the vehicle with an invalid license at the time of the crash.
- Alcohol plays a major role in motorcycle fatalities: Almost half (44 %) of the motorcycle operators who died in single-vehicle crashes in 2003 had blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) levels of .08 g/dl or higher.

STEPS TO IMPROVE MOTORCYCLE SAFETY:

- **Complete a motorcycle rider education and training course.**
Successfully completing rider education and training gives motorcyclists the skills and confidence needed to ride safely in the every traffic mix.
- **Become licensed to operate a motorcycle.**
In every State a special endorsement on your driver's license is required.
- **Never mix motorcycles and alcohol.**
Alcohol affects those skills essential to operate a motorcycle-- balance and coordination. Alcohol and motorcycling are a deadly combination. In 2003, percent of all the fatally injured motorcycle operators had a BAC of .08 or higher.

WEAR THE PROPER GEAR:

- **Protective Gear** serves three purposes for motorcyclists:
 - comfort and protection from the elements;
 - injury protection; and
 - through use of color or reflective material, a means for other motorists to see the motorcyclist.
- **HELMETS:** This is the most important piece of equipment. Safety helmets save lives by preventing or reducing the extent of head injuries in the event of a crash.
- **EYE PROTECTION:** Since many motorcycles don't have windshields, riders must protect their eyes against insects, dirt, rocks, or other airborne matter. Even the wind can cause the eyes to tear and blur vision, and good vision is imperative when riding. Choose good-quality goggles, glasses with plastic or safety lenses, or a helmet equipped with a face shield.
- **JACKETS AND TROUSERS:** Jackets should have long sleeves and be made of heavy-weight, durable material like leather or denim.
- **GLOVES:** Durable gloves should be a non-slip type to permit a firm grip on the controls.
- **FOOTWEAR:** Proper over-the-ankle footwear should be worn.

SAFETY TIPS FOR MOTORISTS

- **RESPECT MOTORCYCLISTS:** Remember, the motorcycle is a vehicle with all of the privileges of any vehicle on the roadway. Give motorcyclists a full lane of travel.
- **LOOK OUT:** Be aware of motorcyclists at intersections, especially when a motorcyclist may be making a left turn. On the highway, be aware when a motorcyclist may be changing lanes.

- **ANTICIPATE A MOTORCYCLIST'S MANEUVER:** Obstructions that you do not notice may be deadly for motorcyclists. Predict evasive actions by motorcyclists.
- **ALLOW PLENTY OF SPACE:** Don't follow a motorcycle too closely. Allow enough room for motorcyclists to maneuver or take evasive action.

SAFETY TIPS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS

- **MAKE YOURSELF VISIBLE:** Choose protective gear that will increase your visibility in addition to providing protection in the event of a crash. Wear bright colors that make you more visible, and if riding at night wear clothing with retroreflective materials.
- **RIDE WHERE YOU CAN BE SEEN:** Remember that there is no one safe place to ride. Use lane positioning to your advantage to be seen and to provide extra space for emergency braking situations or avoidance maneuvers. Avoid the driver's blind spots. Make your lane moves gradually, and always use appropriate signaling.
- **NEVER SHARE A LANE WITH A CAR:** A driver may not expect you to be there and may not be aware of your presence. Remember, most drivers are looking for other, bigger vehicles.
- **CLEARLY SIGNAL YOUR INTENTIONS TO OTHER DRIVERS:** Signal before changing lanes and never weave between lanes.