**2019 Share the Road Campaign**

**TALKING POINTS/FACT SHEET**

May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, and the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) wants to remind vehicle drivers and motorcyclists alike to *Share the Road*. In 2016, there were 5,286 motorcyclists killed in traffic crashes, a 5-percent increase from 2015 (5,029). Those deaths account for 14 percent of the total highway fatalities that year. This increase in motorcycle fatalities continues a tragic trend over the last three years, where fatalities have increased since 2014.

This May, NHTSA wants to ensure that all vehicle drivers *Get Up to Speed on Motorcycles*. This new campaign helps motorists understand standard motorcycle driving behaviors and learn how to drive safely around motorcycles on our roadways. Safe riding practices and cooperation from all road users will help reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on our nation’s highways. It’s especially important for motorists to understand the safety challenges faced by motorcyclists, such as size and visibility, and motorcycle riding practices like downshifting and weaving to know how to anticipate and respond to them. By raising motorists’ awareness, both drivers and riders will be safer sharing the road.

**KNOW THE FACTS**

* Research and state-level data consistently identifies motorists as being at-fault in more than half of all multi-vehicle motorcycle-involved collisions. In fact, per vehicle mile traveled, motorcyclists are about 27 times more likely than passenger vehicle occupants to die in a motor vehicle crash, and 5 times more likely to be injured.
* NHTSA-funded research has shown that people behind the wheels of passenger vehicles are distracted more than 50 percent of the time.
* Improper use of a vehicle’s rear-view and side-view mirrors contributes to collisions, particularly with smaller vehicles like motorcycles. With roughly 40 percent of a vehicle’s outer perimeter zones hidden by blind spots, improper adjustment, or lack of use of one’s side-view mirrors can have dire consequences for motorcyclists.

**TIPS FOR MOTORISTS**

* If you are turning at an intersection and your view of oncoming traffic is partially obstructed, wait until you can see around the obstruction, sufficiently scan for all roadway users (pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists alike), and proceed with caution. Slow your decision-making process down at intersections.
* One’s reaction time and ability to assess and respond to a potential collision, such as a lane change, is significantly hindered if there are large differences in speed among vehicles in traffic. When approaching a congested roadway, being diligent in modifying your speed to match that of the cars in traffic can be a lifesaver, particularly for motorcyclists.
* Allow a motorcyclist a full lane width. Though it may seem as if there is enough room in a single lane for a motor vehicle and a motorcycle, looks can be deceiving. Share the road, but *not* the lane: a motorcyclist needs room to maneuver safely.
* Because motorcycles are smaller than most vehicles, they can be difficult to see. Their size can also cause other drivers to misjudge their speed and distance.
* Size also counts against motorcycles when it comes to blind spots. Motorcyclists can be easily hidden in a vehicle’s blind spot. Always look for motorcycles by checking your mirrors and blind spots before switching to another lane of traffic.
* Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic. This allows motorcyclists to anticipate your movement and find a safe lane position.
* Do not be fooled by a flashing turn signal on a motorcycle—it may not be self-canceling and the motorcyclist may have forgotten to turn it off. Wait to be sure the rider is going to turn before you proceed.
* Allow more follow distance—three or four seconds—when following a motorcycle; this gives the motorcycle rider more time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. Motorcycle riders may suddenly need to change speed or adjust their lane position to avoid hazards such as potholes, gravel, wet or slippery surfaces, pavement seams, railroad crossings, and grooved pavement.

**TIPS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS**

* Wear a DOT-compliant helmet and use reflective tape and gear to be more visible. NHTSA estimates that helmets saved the lives of 1,859 motorcyclists in 2016. An additional 802 lives could have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn their helmets.
* Never ride while impaired or distracted—it is not worth the risk of killing or injuring yourself or someone else. Plus, a DUI costs $10,000 on average, and can lead to jail time, loss of your driver’s license, and higher insurance rates.
* Always drive with a current motorcycle license. It’s the law. In 2016, 27 percent of motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes were riding without valid motorcycle licenses.

**FACTS ABOUT HELMET USE**

* The use of DOT-compliant motorcycle helmets was 65.2 percent in 2017.
* Helmet use continued to be significantly higher in states that require all motorcyclists to be helmeted than in other states that do not.
* Helmet use among motorcyclists on expressways increased significantly to 88.9 percent in 2017, up from 69.8 percent in 2016.
* Helmet use among motorcyclists traveling in fast traffic increased significantly to 80.1 percent in 2017, up from 66.7 percent in 2016.
* Helmet use among motorcyclists traveling in heavy traffic increased significantly to 78.5 percent in 2017, up from 64.0 percent in 2016.

**FACTS ABOUT MOTORCYCLES AND ALCOHOL USE**

* Motorcycle riders involved (killed or survived) in fatal crashes in 2016 had higher percentages of alcohol impairment than any other type of motor vehicle driver (25% for motorcycle riders, 21% for passenger car drivers, 20% for light-truck drivers, and 2% for drivers of large trucks).
* The highest percentages of fatally injured, alcohol-impaired motorcycle riders were in the 35-to-39 age group (38%), followed by the 45-to-49 age group (37%), and the 40-to-44 age group (32%), when compared to other age groups.
* Thirty-seven percent of the 1,970 motorcycle riders who died in single-vehicle crashes in 2016 were alcohol-impaired. Fifty-five percent of those killed in single-vehicle crashes on weekend nights were alcohol-impaired.

For more information, visit [www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov](http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov).

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