



**CITY OF MISSOULA
POLICE DEPARTMENT
*Traffic Division***

PRESS RELEASE

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**MISSOULA POLICE DEPARTMENT JOINS
“SHARE THE ROAD” CAMPAIGN
TO PREVENT MOTORCYCLE CRASHES**

The City of Missoula Police Department joins the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in reminding motorists and motorcyclists alike during Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month to “share the road” to help prevent motorcycle crashes, deaths and injuries on City of Missoula roads.

“Motorcyclists will be out in force as the weather gets warmer, which is why May is the perfect time for Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month,” said Sergeant Greg Amundsen. “Fatal crashes with motorcycles are on the rise, and helmet use is on the decline. We all need to be more aware of motorcyclists in order to save lives.”

May is also Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month in Missoula by proclamation of Mayor John Engen.

Statistics show an alarming trend: In 2012, 4,957 motorcyclists were killed in traffic crashes, a continued increase from 2010. Injured motorcyclists also increased from 81,000 in 2011 to 93,000 in 2012.

Helmet usage is also on the decline, dropping from 66 percent of motorcyclists wearing helmets in 2011 to only 60 percent in 2012. The decrease was most significant among motorcycle passengers, decreasing from 64 percent in 2011 to 46 percent in 2012. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that 1,617 lives were saved in 2011 because of proper helmet usage, but another 701 lives could have been saved if helmets had been worn.

Wearing a helmet is an important way for a motorcyclist to stay safe, but we all play a part.

“It’s up to all motorists and motorcyclists to make our roads safer,” Amundsen said. “All road users need to share the responsibility of keeping the roadways safe. By following road signs, obeying speed limits, and always staying focused on the road, deaths and injuries could be prevented.”

Here are some tips to drivers on how to prevent a fatal crash with a motorcycle:

- Though a motorcycle is a small vehicle, its operator still has all the rights of the road as any other motorist. Allow the motorcycle the full width of a lane at all times.
- Always signal when changing lanes or merging with traffic.
- If you see a motorcycle with a signal on, be careful: Motorcycle signals are often non-canceling and could have been forgotten. Always ensure that the motorcycle is turning before proceeding.
- Check all mirrors and blind spots for motorcycles before changing lanes or merging with traffic, especially at intersections.
- Always allow more following distance – three to four seconds – when behind motorcycles. This gives them more time to maneuver or stop in an emergency.
- Never drive distracted or impaired.

Motorcyclists can increase their safety by following these steps:

- Wear a DOT-compliant helmet and other protective gear.
- Obey all traffic laws and be properly licensed.
- Use hand and turn signals at every lane change or turn.
- Wear brightly colored clothes and reflective tape to increase visibility.
- Ride to the left of the lane where you will be visible to drivers in both mirrors.
- Never ride distracted or impaired.

“Our message is for all drivers and riders,” Amundsen said. “Share the responsibility of keeping our roads safe—always share the road.”

For more information on motorcycle safety, visit www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/Motorcycles.