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May is Motorcycle Awareness Month

MAY 07TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

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Submitted by

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Missouri - Colonel Ron Replogle, superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, would like to make the public aware of Motorcycle Safety Month. Favorable weather is practically an invitation to motorcyclists to go for a ride. Car and truck drivers need to share the road with motorcyclists and keep the following in mind:

- * Drivers should actively watch for motorcyclists.
- * Motorcycles may look farther away than they are due to their smaller size. It is also difficult to judge the speed at which a motorcycle is traveling as it approaches.
- * Motorcycles are hidden easily in a vehicle's blind spots, or masked by objects or backgrounds. Thoroughly check traffic before changing lanes!
- * Motorcyclists may slow down by downshifting or easing off the throttle. So, you may not see a brake light. Allow extra distance between you and a motorcycle.
- * A motorcycle's turn signal does not cancel after the turn like a vehicle's signal does. So, pay attention, the motorcycle may not be turning.
- * A motorcyclist will often adjust their position in the lane in order to be seen more easily and to avoid debris, wind, or passing vehicles. Allow the motorcyclist to share the lane; don't assume they are being reckless.

*Stopping distance for motorcycles is similar to that of cars. But, slippery pavement can make stopping quickly difficult. Please allow more distance behind a motorcycle in these types of road conditions.

It's important that motorcyclists take an active role in their safety. Keep these suggestions in mind when you're on the road:

* Be visible. Motorists often have a hard time seeing you. Keep your headlight on, day or night. Use reflective strips/decals on your clothing and on your motorcycle. Be aware of other vehicle's blind spots.

*Dress for safety. Wear a helmet and eye protection. Wear bright clothing. Wear thick or leather clothing for protection. Section 302.020 RSMo. states, in part, "Every person operating or riding as a passenger on any motorcycle or motortricycle, as defined in Section 301.010 RSMo., upon any highway of this state shall wear protective headgear at all times the vehicle is in motion. The protective headgear shall meet reasonable standards and specifications established by the director."

*Think safety while riding. Give yourself space to react to other motorists' actions. Use lane positioning to increase visibility. Watch for turning vehicles. Signal your next action in advance. Pretend you're invisible and drive defensively.

*Know your bike. Get formal training and take refresher courses. Practice riding your motorcycle before going into heavy traffic. Know how to handle your motorcycle in all types of road conditions.

The Patrol encourages all motorists and watercraft operators to protect themselves by making sure everyone in the vehicle is properly restrained in a seat belt or child restraint and everyone in the vessel is wearing an approved life jacket. Click It 4 Life and Wear It!!!

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