



The Red Light Alert

PAAM Reminds All Drivers to “Share the Road” with Motorcycles.

May Is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month.

Motorcycle riders now account for one out of every ten U.S. road fatalities each year – with motorcyclist deaths from traffic crashes rising each of the last eight years.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 4,553 motorcyclists lost their lives in fatal highway crashes in 2005. Of those, 56 percent involved another vehicle in addition to the motorcycle in the crash.



Secretary Land at the Capital Press Conference Kicking off “Share the Road” and Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month for the State of Michigan.

That’s why the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan (PAAM) announced today that they are joining with other federal, state, and local highway safety and law enforcement organizations in proclaiming May 2007 as “Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month.” All motorists are reminded to safely “Share the Road” with motorcycles and to be extra alert when driving to help keep motorcyclists safe.

“With warmer weather upon us inevitably more motorcycles will be on the roads. Drivers of passenger vehicles need to be extra alert,” said David Gorcyca, President of PAAM. “Motorcycles are the smallest vehicles on the road so folks in other vehicles need to really look out for them—and to take extra care to safely ‘Share the Road.’”

Motorcyclists are often hidden in a vehicles blind spot or missed in a quick look due to their smaller size. Its crucial that motorists always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections. said Gorcyca. "Drivers need to be extra cautious and vigilant of motorcyclists around them."

It is important to remember that motorcyclists are much more vulnerable than passenger vehicle drivers in the event of a crash.



Research shows that approximately 80 percent of motorcycle crashes injure or kill a motorcycle rider, while only 20 percent of passenger car crashes injure or kill a driver or passenger in their vehicle. In fact, per vehicle mile traveled in 2005, motorcyclists were 37 times more likely to die in a traffic crash than occupants in passenger vehicles according to NHTSA.

President Gorcyca offered several tips for drivers to help keep motorcyclists safe on our roadways:

- Remember the motorcycle is a vehicle with all of the rights and privileges of any other motor vehicle on the roadway. Always allow a motorcyclist the full lane width—never try to share a lane;
- Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors

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We're On the Web!

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Traffic Safety Facts on Motorcycles

The number of motorcycle fatalities in Michigan fell from 122 in 2005 to 114 last year, a 7 percent decline.

Nearly half of Michigan's more than 3,200 motorcycle crashes in 2006 involved no other vehicles except the motorcycle, which suggests that greater caution or training could have helped to prevent some of the incidents.

"NHTSA estimates that nationally, helmets saved 1,546 motorcyclists' lives in 2005, and that 728 more could have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn helmets."

Per vehicle mile traveled nationally in 2004, motorcyclists were about 34 times more likely than passenger car occupants to die in a motor vehicle traffic crash and 8 times more likely to be injured.

Share the Road with Motorcycles

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and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections;

- Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic;
- Don't be fooled by a flashing turn signal on a motorcycle – motorcycle signals are often not self-canceling and riders sometimes forget to turn them off. Wait to be sure the motorcycle is going to turn before you proceed;
- Remember that road conditions which are minor annoyances to passenger vehicles pose major hazards to motorcyclists;
- Allow more following distance, three or four seconds, when following a motorcycle, so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. And don't tailgate.

In dry conditions, motorcycles can stop more quickly than cars.

Motorcyclists have responsibilities, too, by following the rules of the roadway, being alert to other drivers, and always wearing protective gear.

"All too often after a crash, the drivers of other vehicles involved say they never saw the motorcyclist and were unable to respond in time," said David Gorcyca "This is no excuse. Too many lives are being lost. Our message to all drivers is: Do your part by safely 'Sharing the Road' with motorcycles."

DID YOU KNOW?

If you drive a motorcycle, it's a 90 day misdemeanor to not have a Motorcycle Endorsement on your driver's license.



Poster for Share the Road Campaign