



City of Missoula
Police Department

Press Release

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MOTORCYCLE SEASON HAS ARRIVED

Missoula Police Department asks for caution from all drivers

May is National Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, and the Missoula Police Department takes this opportunity to encourage motorcyclists and drivers of all other vehicles to remember to share the road.

When summer and warmer weather arrive, more people begin riding motorcycles and commuting to work on motorcycles. Each year in Montana, about 30 motorcyclists die in crashes; the vast majority of those fatalities are among riders who are not wearing helmets.

The Police Department reminds drivers of cars, trucks and buses to look out for and share the road with motorcyclists. Motorcycle riders are reminded to obey all traffic laws, wear Department of Transportation-compliant helmets and use other safety gear, as well as make themselves more visible by wearing bright clothing with reflective markings.

Increasing safe riding and cooperation among all road users and motorcyclists will help reduce the numbers of fatal crashes and injuries on Montana's highways this summer.

Tips for drivers:

- A motorcycle has the same rights and privileges as any other motor vehicle.

- Allow motorcyclists a full lane width; do not try to share their lane.
- Motorcycles are smaller than other vehicles, making it difficult to see them and make an accurate judgment of their speed and distance as they approach.
- Always signal your intention to turn or change lanes and check your blind spots for motorcycles, as they are harder to see and may not appear in your mirrors.
- Use caution when you see a blinking turn signal on a motorcycle. Many motorcycles do not have self-canceling turn signals so they are more likely to be left on.
- Remember that changing road or weather conditions that do not have any real effect on your car can be a real safety issue to a motorcycle, and a motorcyclist may make a movement or stop when you do not anticipate it.
- Keep in mind that on dry roads motorcycles can stop in much shorter distances than cars, so allow an extra following distance when following a motorcycle.

Tips for motorcyclists:

- Avoid riding in poor weather conditions.
- Wear brightly colored clothing with reflective strips and always wear a Department of Transportation-approved helmet.
- Use turn signals for lane changes and turns and be sure to cancel them.
- Consider using hand signals along with the turn signals to improve visibility.
- Ride to the left side of the lane where you typically are more visible to other drivers
- Never ride when impaired.

Our message to all drivers and motorcyclist is the same. Help to share the responsibility of keeping all road users safe and do your part by safely sharing the road.

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