

get UP↑ TO SPEED ON Motorcycles

MOTORISTS ARE REMINDED TO *SHARE THE ROAD* DURING MAY'S MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH

The Franklin Lakes Police Department is partnering with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to remind all motorists to *Share the Road* during Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month this May. While on the roads, motorists may encounter motorcyclist behaviors that seem out of synch with standard vehicle use. NHTSA wants to make sure all motorists *Get Up to Speed on Motorcycles*, and has designed this campaign to address the issues drivers experience when encountering motorcycles on the road. *Get Up to Speed on Motorcycles* brings drivers up to speed on common motorcyclist riding behaviors, and highlights simple things drivers can do to increase the safety of their two-wheeled friends who have very little protection in the event of a multi-vehicle crash.

Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month coincides with May, as the month ushers in warmer weather, and motorcyclists begin to hit the streets. With thousands of deaths each year, motorcyclists are significantly overrepresented in traffic crashes and fatalities. 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. It is essential that vehicle drivers pay complete attention on the roads: Even the smallest momentary lapse in a vehicle driver's awareness can result in the death of an unseen motorcyclist.

"We really want to spread the word to vehicle drivers to keep an eye out for motorcyclists and to always remember to *Share the Road*," said Chief Carmine Pezzuti. "It can be easy to overlook a motorcycle due to their smaller size. For this reason, it's all the more vital we put forth extra effort in keeping watch."

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.

"Wearing a helmet is imperative to the safety of our riders," said Sgt. Denny Knubel. "Just like motorists buckling their seat belts, using a helmet can drastically increase survival rates in the event of a vehicle crash," he said. NHTSA data estimates that helmets saved 1,859

motorcyclists' lives in 2016, and that 809 more lives could have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn their helmets.

Tips for Motorists

Because vehicle drivers control a much larger machine, it is imperative that they keep close watch for motorcyclists who may be riding nearby. Drivers may follow these tips to prevent a fatal crash with a motorcycle:

- Though a motorcycle is a small vehicle, its operator still has the same rights of the road as any other motorist. Allow the motorcycle the full width of a lane at all times.
- Always use a turn 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 the motorcyclist could have forgotten to turn it off. 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 follow distance—three to four seconds—when behind a motorcycle. This gives them more time to maneuver or stop in an emergency.
- Never drive distracted or impaired.

Tips for Motorcyclists

At the same time, motorcyclists must take extra precautions to guard against drivers who may not see them. Motorcyclists may follow these tips to prevent a fatal crash with a vehicle:

- 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 in the middle of the lane where you will be more visible to drivers.
- Never ride distracted or impaired.

As May nears, always remember to *Share the Road* with motorcyclists and vehicle drivers alike. For more information on motorcycle safety, visit www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/motorcycles.

