



PRESS RELEASE

I. DATE AND TIME OF PRESS RELEASE:

May 5, 2009, 1700 Hours

II. TYPE OF INCIDENT/SITUATION/ANNOUNCEMENT:

Livermore Police to support Motorcycle Safety Awareness month in May.

III. FACTUAL INFORMATION:

One out of every nine U.S. road fatalities accounted for last year involved motorcycle riders. This steady increase in fatalities over the past decade represents one of our Nation's greatest challenges.

During the month of May, the Livermore Police Department will be hosting several events focusing on motorcycle safety, as well as unveiling a new motorcycle safety awareness trailer display.

Motorcycle fatalities now account for 11 percent of total road fatalities nationally and have increased each year from a low of 2,116 in 1997 to 4,810 in 2006. So while there has been continued success in reducing vehicle deaths in recent years, this progress is being negatively affected by the rise in motorcycle fatalities which has more than doubled.

In the last two years, there have been 48 collisions involving motorcycles within the City of Livermore, 37 of which involved injuries, and two of those collisions claimed the lives of the motorcyclists.

In order to help encourage drivers to "Share the Road," the Livermore Police Department is joining with other Federal, State and Local highway safety, law enforcement, and motorcycle organizations to proclaim May 2009 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.

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 motor vehicle driver or passenger.

During the month of May, the Livermore Police Department will host a Motorcycle Safety Awareness event at the Livermore Police Department. This event will take place on Saturday, May 16, from 10am to 3pm. There will be vendors, displays, and a demonstration by the LPD Motorcycle Unit. This event is free and open to everyone to attend.

On May 7th and 14th, the Livermore Police Department Traffic Unit will be at Granada and Livermore High School, discussing motorcycle safety and awareness during the school lunch hour.

The Livermore Police Department has received funding from the Office of Traffic Safety and other private funding in outfitting a new motorcycle safety awareness trailer. This trailer will display the motorcycles and stories of two people that lost their lives as a result of a motorcycle collision. This is intended to raise awareness and hopefully help prevent the loss of another life.

Here are several important tips for drivers to help keep motorcyclists safe on our roadways:

- Ø Remember: a 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;
- Ø Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections;
- Ø Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic;
- Ø 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;
- Ø Remember that road conditions that are minor annoyances to other vehicles pose major hazards to motorcyclists;
- Ø 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 DOT-compliant helmets and 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. This is no excuse. Too many crashes are occurring and too many lives are being lost.

The Livermore Police Department enforcement efforts will be focused on unsafe riding by motorcyclists as well as drivers making unsafe actions, jeopardizing the safety of the motoring public.

Get involved and take the necessary precautions that will help make this the first year in recent years when motorcycle fatalities do not increase. Do your part by safely "Sharing the Road" with motorcycles.

IV. LOCATION OF INCIDENT: NA

V. DATE & TIME OCCURRED:

Month of May

VI. SUBJECTS ARRESTED/INVOLVED IN INVESTIGATION: NA

VII. CASE NUMBER: NA
CONTACT PERSON: Officer Justin Lash
PHONE NUMBER: 925-371-4850

Should you require further information please call the contact person designated in this press release. If the contact person is not available, and you have a deadline, please call the on duty Watch Commander at (925) 371-4820.

Steve Sweeney
Chief of Police

VIII. DISTRIBUTION:

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