



PRESS RELEASE

I. DATE OF PRESS RELEASE: May 3, 2011

II. 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.

In 2008, motorcycle fatalities account for 16 percent of total road fatalities in California and had increased each year from 276 in 2000 to 560 in 2008. 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. Statistics for 2009 show a decrease in motorcycle fatalities down to just fewer than 400, and 2010 statistics are not yet available.

In the last two years, there have been 45 collisions involving motorcycles within the City of Livermore, 36 of which involved injuries.

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 2011 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 Carnegie Park (3rd at S. 'J' St). This event will take place on Saturday, May 21, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be vendors, displays, a civilian rider course, slow races, and a demonstration by the LPD Motorcycle Unit. This event is free and open to everyone to attend.

On May 3rd and 4th, the Livermore Police Department Traffic Unit will be at Granada and Livermore High Schools, discussing motorcycle safety and awareness during the school lunch hour.

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

- Remember: a motorcycle is a vehicle with all of the rights and privileges of any other motor vehicle on the roadway.
- Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors 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;
- Realize that lane sharing is legal in California as long as it is being done safely.
- Remember that road conditions that are minor annoyances to other 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 DOT-compliant helmets and protective gear the number of injury and fatal collisions can be reduced.

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.

During the month of May, 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.

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V. DISTRIBUTION:

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