



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MAY 4, 2010

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### SHARE THE ROAD, SAVE LIVES

~ *May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month* ~

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles brought together Floridians whose lives have been impacted by motorcycle crashes, riders, law enforcement officers, safety experts and advocates today at news conferences held simultaneously in locations throughout the state. The Department hosted the events to educate Floridians about motorcycle safety and Florida's requirements for riders, and to promote general awareness among all motorists to share the road. Governor Charlie Crist proclaimed May as *Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month* in Florida to highlight the importance of the public safety issue.

“Motorcycle safety relies on education, awareness and enforcement,” said Captain Mark Welch, chief of public affairs for the Florida Highway Patrol. “Today’s message is simple – that we all have a responsibility to share the road and to look out for each other because everyone on our roadways is responsible for motorcycle safety.”

It is crucial that drivers always visually keep an eye out for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before changing lanes and at intersections. Motorcycle riders need to do their part, too, by making themselves visible to other motorists and by taking extra precaution since they do not have the added protection of being buckled up and inside a motor vehicle.

During the event, Tina McElhenney, [K-MC Sports Foundation](#), shared her personal story of how a motorcycle crash changed her life. In 2002, her son, Kristopher, died in a motorcycle crash. He was only 18 years old.

The [Governors Highway Safety Association](#) recently released preliminary statistics indicating that in 2009, motorcycle fatalities throughout the United States decreased by approximately 10 percent. While that is encouraging news, we are pleased to see Florida's preliminary numbers show an even greater drop in motorcycle fatalities at 24 percent. While this is a significant step in the right direction, the Department remains vigilant in its efforts to reduce injuries and fatalities on Florida's roadways and promote a safe driving environment.

Florida law requires riders to have a motorcycle endorsement on their driver license. A rider must complete the 15-hour, Basic Rider Course to obtain the endorsement. The course introduces riders to the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to ride safely. The course-requirement became Florida law on July 1, 2008. Florida now has more than a million endorsed motorcycle riders, and more than one-third of them have successfully completed the Basic Rider Course that will help prepare them for a lifetime of safe riding. Motorcycle safety is not only important during the month of May, but also all year-round. Please remember to *share the road*.

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles provides highway safety and security through excellence in service, education and enforcement. The Department is leading the way to a safer Florida through the efficient and professional execution of its core mission: the issuance of driver licenses, vehicle tags and titles and operation of the Florida Highway Patrol. To learn more about DHSMV and the services offered, visit [www.flhsmv.gov](http://www.flhsmv.gov).



*Did you know?*

*Thirteen state lawmakers are endorsed motorcycle riders. Last week some of the endorsed members in the House of Representatives joined Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Executive Director Julie L. Jones and Florida Highway Patrol Director, Col. John Czernis, at the State Capitol to promote motorcycle safety.*

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