



NEWS RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT REMINDS MOTORISTS TO SHARE THE ROAD

~ *May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month* ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. –The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has joined with other highway safety, law enforcement and motorcycle organizations to designate the month of May as *Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month*.

There are currently more than 950,000 licensed motorcyclists in Florida, an increase of more than 10 percent over the last two years. Unfortunately, the increase in motorcyclists has also resulted in an increase of motorcycle related crashes and fatalities. In 2007, 517 motorcyclists were killed and 8,186 were injured in crashes.

“Working together we can reverse this trend and save lives. We encourage motorcyclists to take the necessary precautions to ensure both visibility and safety when on the road, and we remind drivers to share the road and always be aware of others around you,” said DHSMV Executive Director Electra Theodorides-Bustle.

Drivers and riders share responsibility for saving lives. Drivers should share the road - giving motorcycles a full lane of travel - and motorcycle riders should *Ride Proud, Dress Loud* using visibility and conspicuity as a means to stay safe. To stress the importance of motorcycle safety, Florida implemented requirements in July 2008 mandating that all new riders pass a Basic Rider Course before a motorcycle endorsement is issued. In the first year of implementation, 40,894 newly licensed motorcyclists successfully completed a course.

Statistics from 2007 show that while only 3.6 percent of vehicle crashes in Florida involved motorcycles, more than 16 percent of all traffic fatalities were motorcyclists.

“The Florida Highway Patrol is committed to keeping our roadways safe for all motorists in Florida,” said Colonel John Czernis, director of the Florida Highway Patrol. “All drivers have a responsibility to be safe and respectful of each other. Approximately one-half of all motorcycle crashes involve another motor vehicle, and two-thirds of those crashes are caused by the vehicle driver, not the motorcyclist. So be alert, be respectful and be ready.”

For more information on motorcycle safety, laws and more, visit the Department’s Web site at <http://motorcycles.flhsmv.gov/>.

DHSMV also reminds everyone to register their Emergency Contact Information at www.flhsmv.gov/eci. The ECI system gives law enforcement immediate access to contact information in cases of an emergency, which makes it easier to contact a family member or friend.

