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COMMUNITY NEWS

Motorcycles: The Smallest Target on the Road

By

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In the fall of 2009, the Georgia State Patrol (GSP), in conjunction with the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, launched a safety education program focused on reducing the number of motorcycle accidents in the state. At the recent Bainbridge Rotary Club meeting, Georgia State Patrol Sgt. Russ Covington spoke about the program and motorcycle safety.

Sgt. Covington, who is a member of the GSP Safety Education Unit, stated that while only 3% of registered vehicles are motorcycles, they account for 13% of fatalities. He stated that there has been a 59% increase in wrecks involving motorcycles in the past 3 years.

Because the ratio of motorcycles to other vehicles on the road is 1/250, Sgt. Covington stated that most drivers don't anticipate seeing a motorcycle on the road. He suggested that by looking for motorcycles while driving, drivers will see the smallest target thus making it impossible to miss a semi.



He gave several tips for drivers to help avoid a wreck with a motorcycle:

Search roadway as you are driving-
look way down the road

Adjust your driving to conditions:
weather, traffic, construction

Evaluate what you need to do

Sgt. Covington gave the following statistics:

96% of motorcycle crashes involve male drivers between the ages of 16-24

92% of those involved in crashes are self-taught or taught by friend or family

Most have less than 5 months experience on a motorcycle
25% either left roadway or hit fixed object
50% of motorcycle crashes resulted from collision with vehicle
40% of motorcycle fatalities occurred when other vehicle was making a left-hand turn

To help avoid crashes while driving a motorcycle, Sgt. Covington stated:

Ride as though you and the motorcycle are invisible
Stay out of other driver's blind spots
Leave space around you
Anticipate oncoming traffic
Watch for vehicles making left-hand turns
Ride within your abilities
Don't ride while impaired
Don't ride at night unless you are experienced
Slow down on unfamiliar roads and at intersections
Take approved motorcycle driving course
Make good decisions

"You can be doing everything right, abiding by all the laws and bad things can still happen to you. Pay attention to what you are doing and expect the unexpected." Sgt. Covington said.

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