

COMMUNITY COMMENT, MAY 15, 2012

This is Officer Matt Harvey with the California Highway Patrol for Community Comment.

When it comes to traffic safety, some actions bear repeating. May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, and the California Highway Patrol reminds all motorists to safely share the road and look twice for motorcyclists.

Humboldt County is home to hundreds of licensed motorcycle riders and an environment that lends itself to near perfect riding conditions. For this reason, it is important that every motorist remain vigilant while traveling on Humboldt County's roadways.

Whether you are at an intersection or changing lanes, you should always keep an eye out for motorcyclists. Because motorcycles have a much smaller profile than other vehicles, it can be difficult for drivers to judge the distance and speed of an approaching motorcycle.

In 2010, the most recent year for which data is available from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System, 361 people died in California and nearly 11,000 others were injured as a result of a crash involving a motorcycle.

In 2011 in Southern Humboldt and Northern Mendocino Counties alone, 19 traffic collisions involved a motorcycle and one resulted in fatal injuries.

It's always important that if you are riding a motorcycle, stay out of the blind spots of other vehicles. And while lane splitting in itself is legal in California for motorcyclists, it needs to be done in a safe and courteous manner.

In addition to being outfitted with the necessary safety equipment and riding gear, it is highly recommended that motorcyclists seek proper and professional training before beginning to ride. The CHP offers the California Motorcyclist Safety Program for people who are interested in riding.

Humboldt County is home to hundreds of miles of rural roadways and beautiful landscape. The weather is getting warmer so many riders will be out on these roadways. The Redwood Run hosted in Northern Mendocino County in June will additionally draw thousands of motorcyclists to Humboldt County from throughout the United States.

While traveling California's vast and diverse roadways this summer, the California Highway Patrol reminds all motorists to share the road and always look twice for motorcyclists. Don't be distracted by cell phones, other electronic devices, or anything that would divert your attention from the road.

If you are a motorcycle rider, be sure to get properly trained and licensed, wear all the gear all the time, stay alert, don't drink and ride, and always think safety.

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