



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Motorcycle safety patrols begin July 29

OLYMPIA, WA — Summer time is motorcycle riding time. Unfortunately, summer time is also the time when more motorcycle riders are killed or injured in crashes. In an effort to reduce these crashes, increased motorcycle safety patrols start **July 29, and run through August 14 in Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties.**

The patrols will focus on illegal driving behaviors by both riders and other vehicle drivers. Approximately 20 law enforcement agencies in these counties, including the Washington State Patrol, will be working overtime focused on drivers and riders who commit traffic safety violations.

“Motorcyclists are especially vulnerable and continue to be over-represented in deadly crashes,” said WTSC Director Darrin Grondel. “We are working together to end these tragic but preventable deaths.”

These patrols are part of the Washington Traffic Safety Commission’s (WTSC) motorcycle safety education campaign known as “It’s a Fine Line.” From 2012 through 2014, motorcycles made up just 4 percent of the registered vehicles on Washington’s roads, but accounted for nearly 17 percent of all traffic fatalities (224 of 1336). Of these fatal motorcycle crashes, 53 percent were single motorcycle crashes where no other vehicle was involved, and 75 percent were traced to causal factors committed by the motorcyclist. Driving under the influence (DUI) of drugs and alcohol, speeding, and running off the road are the main contributing factors in motor vehicle deaths.

“Each summer in our state, we lose 35-40 people to motorcycle crashes, and that’s not acceptable,” Grondel added. “We want to ensure that everyone arrives home safely to their families.”

The WTSC and participating law enforcement agencies condemn profiling. Trained and commissioned law enforcement officers will be conducting these patrols enforcing traffic violations as defined by Washington State laws.

For more information on the “It’s A Fine Line” motorcycle safety program in Washington, please visit <http://itsafineline.com/>

These and all extra law enforcement patrols are part of Target Zero—striving to end traffic deaths and serious injuries in Washington by 2030. For more information, visit www.targetzero.com. Additional information on the Washington Traffic Safety Commission can be found on the website, www.wtsc.wa.gov.

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In the last five years (2011-2015) in Washington, an average of 74 motorcyclists died each year.

In the last five years (2011-2015) in Washington, an average of 38 motorcyclists died in July, August, and September.

Alcohol and/or drug impairment was a factor in 57 percent of fatalities and 11 percent of serious injuries. Marijuana has become a larger contributing factor in crashes in recent years.

Speeding was involved in 51 percent of fatalities and 30 percent of serious injuries among motorcyclists.

Lane departure (running off the road) contributed to 49 percent of fatalities and 28 percent of serious injuries.

Washington deadly crash data is available by state and county here: <http://wtsc.wa.gov/research-data/quarterly-target-zero-data/>

For journalists on word choice:

A “crash” happens when a vehicle collides with another object. Using the word “accident” assumes it was a bizarre occurrence that no one could have stopped, when in fact the circumstances leading up to 90 percent of car crashes are predictable and preventable. WTSC is seeing and hearing “crash” in the news more often lately and wants to thank those journalists who are already making this insightful choice.