



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Motorcycle safety patrols during Spring Opener near Easton

OLYMPIA, WA — More motorcycles travel on Washington’s roads in the summer months than any other time of the year. Unfortunately, summer is also the time when more motorcycle riders are killed or injured in crashes. In a continued effort to reduce these crashes, increased safety patrols **will be visible June 28-30 during the ABATE Spring Opener near Easton, WA.**

The patrols will focus on illegal driving behaviors by both motorcycle riders and other vehicle drivers. **Kittitas County Sheriff’s Office, Cle Elum-Roslyn Police Department, and the Washington State Patrol** will be working overtime focused on drivers and riders who commit traffic safety violations.

“Motorcyclists are vulnerable road users and continue to be over-represented in deadly crashes,” said WTSC Director Darrin Grondel. “These crashes are preventable and we are working together to end these tragic 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 2013 through 2017, motorcycles made up just 3 percent of the registered vehicles on Washington’s roads, but accounted for 15 percent of all traffic fatalities (378 of 2,550). 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 all motor vehicle deaths including motorcycles.

“These motorcycle events bring thousands of people to one area of our state,” Grondel added. “We want to ensure that everyone enjoys the weekend and arrives home safely.”

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 training videos and other 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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Data from Washington’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan: Target Zero:

Year	Total Traffic Fatalities	Motorcycle Fatalities	Percentage of Total
2013	436	73	17%
2014	462	69	15%
2015	551	75	14%
2016	536	81	15%
2017	565	80	14%
Totals	2,550	378	15%

The federal government estimates that, per vehicle mile traveled, the number of deaths on motorcycles is over 26 times the number in cars.

In the last five years (2013-2017) in Washington, an average of 76 motorcyclists died each year.

The common belief that most motorcycle crashes are caused by other motorists is inaccurate. In actuality, 75% of all fatalities are due to motorcycle rider error. When we break this down by type of motorcycle, sport bikes are overrepresented — 86% of their fatalities were rider-caused.

Impairment by drugs and/or alcohol, speeding, and improper passing are the major risk factors for most serious injury and fatal motorcycle crashes.

Washington is using education for both motorcycle operators and other vehicle drivers, as well as a focus on training and licensing endorsement, to address motorcycle fatalities and serious injuries.

Motorcycle riders involved in fatal and serious injury crashes are primarily male, comprising 90% of the fatalities during 2013–2017.

Currently, motorcycles may be purchased and registered in Washington without a valid motorcycle endorsement. This contributed to the fact that from 2013–2017, over 1/3 of riders involved in fatal crashes were not endorsed to be riding a motorcycle.

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.