



## SHARE THE ROAD

Submitted by

Captain Brian Arnold—Stark County Sheriff's Office

With warmer weather getting here, motorcycles will be back out on the road—and the drivers of passenger vehicles need to be alert. One out of every nine U.S. road fatalities accounted for in 2007 involved motorcycle riders.

The steady increase over the past decade represents one of our Nation's greatest

challenges. Stark County Safe Communities have proclaimed May 2009 as "Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month." All motorists are reminded to safely "Share the Road" with motorcycles and to be extra alert when driving to help keep motorcyclists safe.

Motorcycle fatalities now account for 11% of total road fatalities and have increased each year from a low of 2,116 in 1997 to an all-time high of 4,810 in 2006. So, while there has been continued success in reducing automobile deaths in recent years, this progress is being negated by the rise in motorcycle fatalities, which has more than doubled in one decade.

In a crash, motorcyclists are much more vulnerable than passenger vehicle drivers. Research shows that approximately 80% of motorcycle crashes injure or kill a motorcycle rider, while only 20% of passenger car crashes injure or kill a driver or passenger in their vehicle. In fact, per vehicle miles traveled in 2006, motorcyclists were 35 times more likely than passenger car occupants to die in a motor vehicle traffic crash.

Motorcyclists have responsibilities, too, by following the rules of the roadway, being alert to other drivers, and always wearing a DOT-compliant helmet and protective gear. All too often after a crash, the drivers of other vehicles involved say they never saw the motorcyclist and were unable to respond in time. This is no excuse when so many crashes are still occurring, and so many lives are being lost. Get involved and take the necessary precautions to help make this the first year in recent years when motorcycle fatalities do not increase. Remember to safely "Share the Road" with motorcycles.

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