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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **OHS Reminds Drivers to “Share the Road” with Motorcyclists** *May proclaimed Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month*

**Dover** – Warmer weather is finally here and motorcycle enthusiasts say it’s a great time to ride. But it can also be very dangerous for them. Motorcycle fatalities have risen each year for the last eight nationally, and motorcycle riders now account for one out of every ten people killed on the nation’s roads.

That’s why the Office of Highway Safety is joining with other federal, state and local safety organizations in proclaiming May as “Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month,” and remind motorists to safely “Share the Road” with motorcycles.

“We’ll all start to see more motorcycles on the roads now that the weather has warmed up. Motorcycles are motor vehicles too and have the same rights as any other on the road, but they are some of the smallest vehicles out there, and drivers of passenger vehicles need to be extra alert for their presence,” said Andrea Summers, Community Relations Officer for the Delaware Office of Highway Safety (OHS).

Locally, during the month of May and continuing through September OHS is highlighting its *Ride Safe. Ride Smart.* public awareness campaign. The initiative includes billboards which encourage drivers to “Keep an Eye out for Motorcyclists”, print ads reminding motorcycle riders to slow down and keep a safe following distance, and brochures which educate riders about the dangers of speed, drinking and riding, as well as the importance of suiting up for safety before riding.

The goal of the campaign is not only to encourage drivers of passenger vehicles to watch more closely for motorcyclists, but also to remind motorcyclists of their responsibilities when operating their bikes in an effort to reduce motorcycle fatalities.

In 2005, motorcycle deaths in the first state doubled from 10 in the previous year, to 21. In 2006, the number of fatalities fell back to 12. The leading factors in these fatal crashes were speeding, drinking and riding, following too closely and stunt riding. The average age of the motorcyclist killed in 2005 was 42.

The Ride Safe. Ride Smart. campaign was created in response to the dramatic rise in deaths and fostered a new partnership between the Office of Highway Safety and the state's Motorcycle Safety Committee, which includes motorcycle riders, businesses, advocacy groups, and representatives of the DMV Motorcycle Rider Training Program. In 2007, OHS was added as a full time member of the Motorcycle Safety Committee, chaired by Representative Bruce Ennis.

OHS is offering the following safety tips for both motorists and motorcycle operators:

#### Motorists:

- Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections;
- Always allow a motorcyclist the full lane width;
- Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic;
- Allow more following distance, three or four seconds, when following a motorcycle, so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency; Never tailgate.

#### Motorcyclists

- Do not try to share a lane with a vehicle, stay in your own
- Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic;
- Never drink and ride, it is responsible for roughly 1/4<sup>th</sup> of Delaware's motorcycle deaths
- Follow posted speed limits and keep all wheels on the ground at all times
- Watch out for loose sand, gravel, debris, and uneven and textured surfaces
- Do not pass on the shoulder
- Suit up for Safety – wear not only a helmet, but also appropriate eye gear, long sleeves, over the ankle boots and reflective material when riding at night
- Keep your skills up to date by signing up for a DMV Motorcycle Training Course, either beginner or advanced

For copies of the motorcycle safety brochure, contact OHS at (302) 744-2740. For more information on the Motorcycle Training Courses visit [www.dmv.de.gov](http://www.dmv.de.gov) and click on Driver Services.