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May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month
Drivers are encouraged to "Share the Road"

The warmer weather means a lot more motorcycles will be out on the road across California. May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, and the Ventura Police Department is taking the opportunity to remind drivers and motorcycle riders to share the road and look out for one another.

"Motorcycle riders are out in the open and are harder to see," Traffic Unit Sergeant Michael Brown said. "Drivers and riders should take extra precautions by keeping their distance and watching their speed."

During the month of May, Ventura Police Officers will step up enforcement specifically geared toward stopping drivers and motorcycle riders for traffic violations that increase the risk of crashes.

With nearly 900,000 registered motorcycles in the state, Californians enjoy a hobby that can be challenging, and does not have the same protections as drivers in the event of a crash. In 2017, 576 people were killed in motorcycle crashes statewide, a nearly 17 percent increase from 2015.

The Ventura Police Department offers the best safety practices for drivers and motorcycle riders:

Drivers:

- Check your mirrors and blind spots. Make sure your vehicle's rear and side-view mirrors are adjusted properly.
- Use your signal when changing lanes. If you see a motorcycle with a signal on, make sure the motorcycle is turning before proceeding.
- Slow down behind motorcycles and keep your distance.
- Never share a lane with a motorcycle.
- Be aware of motorcycles lane splitting, which is legal. Give riders enough room to pass.
- Always look twice at intersections and allow enough space for a motorcycle to clear the roadway before making a turn.

Motorcyclists:

- Always wear a helmet, bright colors and protective gear.
- Use your turn signal at every lane change or turn.
- Turn lights on even during the day.
- Keep your distance.
- Consider the width of lanes, roadway and weather conditions when lane splitting.
- Avoid lane splitting next to larger vehicles such as big rigs, buses and motorhomes.
- It is more dangerous to split lanes at higher speeds. It is safer to split between the far-left lanes.

The Ventura Police Department encourages all motorcycle riders, new and experienced, to enroll in the California Highway Patrol's motorcycle training course. For more information, or to find a training site near you, visit www.californiamotorcyclist.com.

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