



NEWS RELEASE

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START SEEING MOTORCYCLISTS — TWO RIDERS KILLED THIS WEEK

But 45 Rider Deaths in 2010 Down 15 Percent from 2009

ST. PAUL — During a deadly week for motorcyclists when two riders were killed — including the first rider death of the year on Saturday, May 7 — the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Office of Traffic Safety is reinforcing basic safety tips for riders and motorists during the warm-weather riding season.

Officials say the spike in gas prices may result in more motorists shifting to riding — which would add to the all-time high number of Minnesota motorcycle ownership, currently more than 225,000.

“Now is the time for motorists to be ready for riders and look twice for motorcyclists, especially at intersections and crossing roads,” says Bill Shaffer, DPS motorcycle safety coordinator. “Riders need to help themselves by riding sober and wearing high-visibility protective gear.”

Shaffer stresses the importance of safety training; course schedules are available at www.motorcyclesafety.org. Classes are offered for riders of all skill levels.

This week’s rider deaths included:

- May 7 — 53-year-old man lost control and hit the guard rail on Scott County Road 18.
- May 10 — 62-year-old woman was a passenger in a trike-style motorcycle that hit a curb on Hwy. 19 in Scott County; she was ejected and killed.

DPS reports 45 rider deaths for 2010, a 15 percent drop in deaths from 2009 (53 deaths) and a 38 percent drop from the 24-year high death figure of 2008 (72 deaths).

DPS attributes the drop in deaths to more riders getting trained (more than 25,000 riders trained in last three years), and riders new to motorcycling a few years ago (mostly older males) have gained experience and improved rider skills. Education and enforcement efforts are also factors, according to DPS.

Motorist safety tips:

- **Anticipate:** expect to see motorcyclists in traffic, and allow them plenty of room to avoid surface hazards.
- **Communicate:** always use turn signals to indicate your intentions. This allows riders time to anticipate traffic flow and find a safe lane position.
- **Look twice:** because motorcycles are smaller, they can be difficult to spot in traffic and can appear to be farther away than they actually are. Take a second look before turning or entering a roadway.

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