



For Immediate Release

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May 20, 2020

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Motorcycle Fatality Increase a Cause for Concern

Olympia WA - For a motorcycle rider, what could be better than warm spring weather, sunny days, and open roads? For too many riders in Washington, recent lower traffic volumes have led to higher speeds and tragically, to an increase in rider deaths.

In 2020, 12 of the 17 motorcycle fatalities on Washington roads occurred during the month of April. Speeding was a common factor in these almost always preventable collisions.

Speed is usually the answer. There has been a significant increase in high speed violations by both cars and motorcycles. Speeds in the mid to upper 100's have been observed with one vehicle traveling 192mph. At these speeds, the chances of being involved in a collision increase dramatically, and the severity of the collision is often deadly.

In 2019, there were 92 motorcycle fatalities, the most since 1982. Leading factors contributing to these numbers were speed, inexperience as demonstrated by a lack of proper license endorsement, and driving while impaired. Driving while impaired is always dangerous, but when the impaired person makes a choice to operate a motorcycle, the danger rises significantly. The operation of a motorcycle takes more mental focus and physical coordination than driving a car. Focus and coordination are severely diminished by intoxicants and drugs. Motorcycles also lack many of a car's safety devices such as seatbelts and airbags to protect a rider in a collision. Even "minor" motorcycle collisions can have major consequences.

Unfortunately, another dangerous decision that some riders have made is failing to stop for police for a speeding violation. The rapid acceleration and top speeds of modern motorcycles leads some riders to think that running from the police is possible. That is always a bad decision often leading to dire consequences including serious legal troubles, injury, or being the victim or cause of a fatal collision.

WSP too often sees individuals turn what would have been a traffic infraction into a serious felony offense leading to prison time and changed life trajectories. Very often, riders who think they are getting away, are actually being followed by aircraft operated by WSP troopers. The plane follows the rider and safely coordinates pursuing and awaiting troopers to a final stopping location where the rider is arrested and taken into custody.

WSP would like to remind all motorcyclists that open roads do not mean you are free to open the throttle. Enjoy your ride but stay safe, obey speed limits, wear safety gear, be visible to other drivers, pay attention, and always ride sober.

We would also like to remind all motorists that no matter how busy the roadways are or are not, speed is the number one factor in traffic fatalities. Slow down. The life you save may be your own.

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