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Watch for motorcycles!

Visibility reduced as daylight saving time ends Nov. 1

MEDFORD — Shorter daylight hours and reduced visibility during morning and evening commute are forerunners of the change of seasons. Although the end of daylight saving time is around the corner, motorcyclists will continue riding in southern Oregon through October, if the weather permits.

"Because of a motorcycle's relative size, it is already at a disadvantage on the road," said ODOT Regional Traffic Safety Coordinator Rosalee Senger.

The TEAM OREGON Motorcycle Safety Program notes poor lane position is often a factor in motorcycle-vehicle crashes. Motorcycle riders should actively avoid driver's blind spots or being hidden behind vehicles objects that block a driver's view.

"Three really simple strategies can make a motorcyclist more visible: road positioning, high-visibility riding gear and reflective materials," said Pat Hahn, Communication manager for TEAM OREGON.

Improving visibility is vital to saving lives on the road. Even rain can create dangerous driving conditions, but especially so after extended days without precipitation.

"The coming end of daylight saving time means drivers will have different levels of light and visibility on their early morning and late afternoon commutes, so we want to encourage everyone to allow additional travel time," said Senger. "Drivers need to carefully scan the roadway at all times for everyone who shares the road, including motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians".

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) offers the following safety reminders to help reduce the number of motorcycle-involved crashes on the road.

- Road users should never drive, bike, or walk while distracted. Doing so can result in tragic consequences for all on the road, including motorcyclists.
- A motorcyclist has the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as any other motorist on the roadway; they are also required to adhere to those same rights, privileges, and responsibilities.

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- Allow a motorcyclist a full lane width. Though it may seem as if there is enough room in a single lane for a motor vehicle and a motorcycle, looks can be deceiving. Do not share the lane: a motorcyclist needs room to maneuver safely.
- Because motorcycles are smaller than most vehicles, they can be difficult to see. Their size can also cause other drivers to misjudge their speed and distance. Allow extra time before turning or pulling in front of a motorcyclist.
- Size also counts against motorcycles when it comes to blind spots. Motorcyclists can be easily hidden in a vehicle's blind spot. Always look for motorcycles by checking your mirrors and blind spots before switching to another lane of traffic.
- Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic. This allows motorcyclists to anticipate your movement and find a safe lane position.
- Don't be fooled by a flashing turn signal on a motorcycle—it may not be self-canceling and the motorcyclist may have forgotten to turn it off. Wait to be sure the rider is going to turn before you proceed.
- Allow more distance – three or four seconds – when following a motorcycle; this gives the motorcycle rider more time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. Motorcycle riders may suddenly need to change speed or adjust lane position to avoid hazards such as potholes, gravel, wet or slippery surfaces, pavement seams, railroad crossings, and grooved pavement.

TEAM OREGON, an outreach program of the Oregon State University (OSU) College of Public Health and Human Sciences, provides statewide training, education and outreach for riders of all levels of experience and riding ability. OSU partners with ODOT's Transportation Safety Division, which provides direction, funding and support for the program and activities.

[MEDIA NOTE: ODOT Regional Traffic Safety Coordinator Rosalee Senger, 541-957-3657, will be available for interview. For TEAM OREGON motorcycle safety and rider education program information call Pat Hahn, 800-545-9944 or visit their website at team-oregon.org.]

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