OCEANSIDE POLICE DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE

Contact:
Acting Captain Leonard Mata, Investigations Division
(760) 435-4688 Lmata@ci.oceanside.ca.us
(760) 801-1917 Cell

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OCEANSIDE POLICE DEPARTMENT WORKING TO IMPROVE MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

Police to increase enforcement aimed at dangerous riders and careless motorists

The Oceanside Police Department will be conducting a specialized Motorcycle Safety Enforcement Operation on August 13 and August 14, 2012, in an effort to continue lowering deaths and injuries. Extra officers will be on duty patrolling areas frequented by motorcyclists and where motorcycle crashes occur. Officers will be looking for drivers and riders who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol and cracking down on traffic violations made by regular vehicle drivers as well as motorcyclists that can lead to motorcycle collisions, injuries and fatalities.

After ten years of steadily increasing motorcycle fatalities in California, increasing 175 percent from 204 killed in 1998 to 560 killed in 2008, the trend has changed. Two consecutive years of fewer motorcycle fatalities – 394 in 2009 and 352 in 2010 – have resulted in a 37 percent decrease since the 2008 peak. This is a positive trend that we want to see continue.

California collision data reveals that primary causes of motorcycle-involved crashes include speeding, unsafe turning, and impairment due to alcohol and other drugs. The Oceanside Police Department is also reminding all motorists to always be alert and watch out for motorcycles, especially when turning and changing lanes.

Some of the reduction in riders killed can be attributed to fewer improperly licensed riders. In 2008, 62.7 percent of motorcycle operators killed under age 25 were not properly licensed. In 2009, that statistic fell to only 45.5 percent. Riders, young and old, are encouraged to be properly licensed and to seek training and safety information.

"The terrible trend of rising motorcyclist fatalities has been reversed, though there is more that everyone can do to save more lives. Riders and drivers need to respect each other and share the road," said California Office of Traffic Safety Director, Christopher J. Murphy.

Riders can get training through the California Motorcyclist Safety Program. Information and training locations are available at www.CA-msp.org or 1-877 RIDE 411 or 1-877-743-3411.

Funding for this program is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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Motorcycle Safety Tips

Tips for drivers to help keep motorcyclists safe on our roadways:

* 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 signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic;

* Don't be fooled by a flashing turn signal on a motorcycle – motorcycle signals are often not self-canceling and riders sometimes forget to turn them off. Wait to be sure the motorcycle is going to turn before you proceed;

* Allow more following distance, three or four seconds, when behind a motorcycle so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. And don't tailgate. In dry conditions, motorcycles can stop more quickly than cars.

*Never drive while distracted.

Motorcyclists can increase their safety by:

* Positioning themselves in the lane where they will be most visible to other drivers.

*Never driving while impaired.

* Wearing a DOT-compliant helmet;

* Using the motorcycle's turn signals; it is California law.

* Combining hand signals and turn signals to draw more attention to themselves;

* Avoiding riding in poor weather conditions;

* Wearing brightly colored protective gear;

* Using reflective tape and stickers to increase conspicuity; and

The message to all drivers and motorcyclists is: Help to share in the responsibility and do your part by safely "sharing the road."