

Press Release



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Greene County

Greene County Public Health
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Greene County Safe Communities Coalition and NHTSA Remind Drivers and Riders That Motorcyclist's Safety Is Everyone's Safety

XENIA, OH — May marks the beginning of riding season for many motorcyclists in America. It is also Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. The Greene County Safe Communities Coalition and the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reminds all motorists that Motorcyclist's Safety Is Everyone's Safety. Motorcycle safety is an ongoing responsibility for all road users. By consistently following safe driving and riding practices and sharing them with others, all motorists can help reduce the number of motorcyclist fatalities on America's roads.

Each year motorcyclists are overrepresented in traffic crashes. Two leading contributors to this reality are speeding and alcohol impairment.

According to NHTSA data, there were 6,218 motorcyclists killed in traffic crashes in 2022, which represents 15% of total highway fatalities for that year and a 1% increase from 2021 (6,143). Per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, motorcyclists were about 22 times more likely than passenger car occupants to die in a motor vehicle crash and 4 times more likely to be injured. Locally, two out of five fatal accidents in Greene County in 2023 involved a motorcyclist in which neither were wearing a helmet. In April of 2023, a motorcycle fatality occurred, and the rider had alcohol and marijuana in their system.

Speeding, like in all other years, was a major contributing factor to motorcyclist fatalities in 2022. Thirty-five percent of all motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes were speeding, compared to 22% of all passenger car drivers, 15% of all light-truck drivers, and 6% of all large-truck drivers. Motorcycle riders 21 to 24 years old involved in fatal crashes had the highest speeding involvement at 51%.

Alcohol impairment also plays a significant role in motorcycle-involved crash fatalities, and 2022 was no exception. Of the 2,254 motorcycle riders who died in single-vehicle crashes that year, 42% were alcohol-impaired. Motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes (killed and survived) had a higher percentage of alcohol impairment than any other type of motor vehicle driver (28% for motorcycle riders, 25% for passenger car drivers, 21% for light-truck drivers, and 3% for large-truck drivers). Forty-six percent of motorcycle riders killed in single-vehicle crashes that occurred on weekends were alcohol-impaired. Forty-two percent of all motorcycle riders killed in night-time were alcohol-impaired, compared to 16% of those killed in daytime crashes.

Like seat belts, wearing DOT-compliant (Department of Transportation) motorcycle helmets save lives and reduce injuries. After three years of declines, motorcycle helmet use increased among motorcycle riders from 64.9% in 2021 to 66.5% in 2022. Similarly, among motorcycle riders with passengers, helmet use increased: 52.1% in 2021 and 58.3% in 2022. Unfortunately, helmet use among motorcyclists traveling in light traffic decreased significantly from 59% in 2021 to 35.5% in 2022. NHTSA data estimates that helmets saved 1,872 motorcyclists' lives in 2017 and that 749 more lives could have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn their helmets.

Helmet use also continued to be significantly higher in states that require all motorcyclists to be helmeted than in those that do not.

While all motorcycle helmets sold in the United States are required to meet the federal standards and have the DOT certification label, there are retailers who sell novelty helmets that do not meet these safety standards. False DOT labels are also sold to put on these fake helmets. Novelty helmets are unsafe and will not protect motorcyclists in the event of a crash. They should not be purchased and should not be worn while operating or riding on a motorcycle. Use of noncompliant motorcycle helmets among motorcyclists traveling in slow traffic increased significantly from 5.9% in 2021 to 16.9% in 2022. Use of noncompliant motorcycle helmets among motorcyclists traveling in light traffic increased significantly from 5.3% in 2021 to 21.1% in 2022. Use of noncompliant motorcycle helmets among motorcyclists traveling in objectively characterized urban areas increased significantly from 5.2% in 2021 to 11.5% in 2022.

The following are safe driving and riding practices that all road users — vehicle drivers and motorcyclists alike — should follow to help reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on America's roadways:

- Observe all traffic laws and always obey the speed limit.
- Drive and ride alcohol- and drug-free.
- Avoid distractions while driving or riding.
- Drivers should yield to motorcyclists, especially while turning at intersections.
- Motorcyclists should wear high-visibility protective gear and DOT-compliant motorcycle helmets. Learn how to identify a safe, DOT-compliant helmet at www.nhtsa.gov/motorcycle-safety/choose-right-motorcycle-helmet

One other significant step that motorcycle riders can take toward promoting road safety for all motorists is completing a rider education and training course. During Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month — and every month — motorcycle riders should commit to adopting and promoting safe driving and riding practices. Everyone can work towards a secure environment for motorcycle riders and all other motorists.

For more information on motorcycle safety, visit NHTSA.gov/Motorcycles. For additional statistics, please visit <https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/> and search “motorcycle” under Crash Data Publications.

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