

# **Louisiana District Motorist Awareness**

## **March 2022**

### **Here are some Safe Driving Tips for Motorists and Motorcyclist.**

Over half of all motorcycle crashes involve a collision with another vehicle. In many crashes, the other driver says "they never saw the motorcyclist until it was too late to avoid the accident". There seems to be many reasons why this happens.

- Many drivers of cars or trucks don't seem really knowledgeable about motorcycles or don't even seem to look for them in traffic.
- Motorcycle riders often wear black leather pants, black leather jackets, wear a black helmet and ride a black bike. To make their bike look real cool they take the normal headlight off and replace it with a much smaller one and take the taillight off and put something like a two-inch light on the back. Sitting at a red light they get hit in the rear by another vehicle. If the motorcyclist lives, he sometimes asks didn't that driver see me sitting at the red light. The answer is they probably didn't. We are lucky with our Gold Wings, that the motorcycle comes with double headlights, and dual taillights, with large blinkers. Many of us add modulators on the front and rear of the motorcycle. The front modulator is placed on the bright lights and flash at 40% power rating. There is a mandatory sensor that when it gets dark that the modulator doesn't work. On the rear modulator called a back-off modulator, when the brake is applied the brake light flashes 4 times in 4 seconds and then stays steady for 4 seconds and back to 4 flashes. This gets the attention of other vehicles. Either of these lights are not that expensive and very well might save an accident from even happening.
- We also ride in groups during Chapter rides. There is strength in numbers as we have many more headlights being shown to other vehicles coming in from side streets and even oncoming traffic. I have had a modulator on all three of my Gold Wings and as a road captain, and being the lead bike or the tail dragger, it helps other vehicles see our group.
- When riding alone motorcycles are smaller than other vehicles, so they are more difficult to spot in traffic and can be hidden by other vehicles or roadside features. The size also makes their speed and distance difficult to judge. Sometimes a car or truck driver sees the oncoming motorcycle but pull out in front of it. The reason is sometimes they see the motorcycle but think it is a bicycle going the average 15 MPH and pulls out in front of the motorcycle that was travelling at 45 MPH, closing the distance three times faster than expected.

- A motorcycle headlight use, which is mandatory on our motorcycles doesn't give motorcycle riders much of an advantage. This is due to the widespread use of daytime running lights on cars.
- The smaller size and single headlight on the motorcycle make it more difficult for other drivers to judge a rider's speed and distance. Again, the Gold Wing is slightly bigger and has dual headlights, and we often add those driving lights in front of the motorcycle. Many of us add a wing on the back of the motorcycle and we add an additional light on that wing that stays lit as an additional taillight and it also acts as an additional brake light.
- This article has given you some cautions and warnings about riding a motorcycle and some things we can do to help prevent an accident from even happening.
- I am going to give you some advice that my brother-in-law gave me when I first started riding my first motorcycle a 350 Honda. He told me to play like I am invisible, and my motorcycle is invisible and then drive accordingly. This means you are going down the highway or road and traveling at 55 MPH which is the speed limit. You are now coming up on a crossroad and see a car coming on the road from the right to cross the road you are on. You are  $\frac{1}{4}$  block from that intersection. You do not need to slam on the front and rear brakes and go in a skid and lay the motorcycle down. No, you might want to take your feet off the highway pegs and move them to the lower pegs and be ready to hit that rear brake. You might also move two fingers on the right-hand brake. You don't need to apply pressure. You are now coming up on the intersection and you are very aware of that vehicle driver getting eye contact. In the real world driving at 55 mph you are closing that  $\frac{1}{4}$  block distance very fast. Once you notice there is a problem it takes about two seconds to see the problem and to start to react. To move your feet from the highway peg and to the lower peg to hit the brake will take another second. For the motorcycle to respond and to start the slowdown and to a stop will take several more feet going toward that vehicle that pulled out in front of you. To be exact here is the time and distance.
- At 55 mph, your vehicle is traveling at about 80 feet per second. Feet-per-second is determined by multiplying speed in miles-per-hour by 1.47 (55 mph x 1.47 = 80 feet per second.) How many feet does it take to travel 55 mph? You will have travelled 419 ft. If this vehicle pulled out in front of you when you were 100 ft from the intersection Yes you will probably hit the vehicle, but you will be at least more prepared to try to slow you forward motion and it may be the difference between getting hurt very bad instead of dying. This driving as you are invisible and driving accordingly, set you up to be better prepared for the unpredictable. The other driver always says, I never saw him!!!
- These points are examples why the Motorist Awareness Program was implemented in GWRRA. We are educating the public to be aware of their surroundings and other types of vehicles sharing the road. We believe in education and safety so everyone can share the roads no matter where they are or what form of transportation they use.

**Stay Safe and See you next time**

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