

Thursday, 15 May 2008 **EMBARGOED UNTIL 16/05/08 AT 00:01 HOURS**

Over 30s at risk as motorcycle crashes increase

For motorcyclists in their 30s or 40s, the idea of heading out on Scotland's roadways on a weekend may invoke images of exhilarating leisure – driving through rural scenery dotted with lochs and featuring craggy mountains and twisty country roads.

But for many of Scotland's road policing officers, the images are far too often a mangled motorcycle with a seriously injured rider in their 30s or 40s lying nearby.

In 2006, 58 motorcyclists were killed on Scottish roadways while 350 were seriously injured. A decade ago, as government statistics reveal, the annual average was 31 motorcyclists killed and 324 seriously injured.

That rise in deaths and serious injuries is a concern to Scotland's police chiefs who have been working earnestly to dramatically reduce those numbers.

“Several years ago, the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) implemented a road policing strategy that is focused on substantive casualty reduction,” said Chief Superintendent Michael McCormick (Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary), Portfolio Lead on Casualty Reduction of the ACPOS Road Policing Business Area.

“While the total number of road fatalities and seriously injured motorists and passengers has dropped substantially since 2001, the number crashes resulting in fatalities and serious injuries with motorcyclists has increased during the past decade. Scotland's police officers will continue to robustly pursue activities that will see those numbers reduced in the years ahead.”

One of the strategy's programmes is the quarterly “*Country Roads Weekend*”, which publicly highlights regular on-going policing activity throughout Scotland to reduce the numbers of motorists killed and/or seriously injured on country roads.

The Association will be co-ordinating the second of its four “*Country Roads Weekends*” this year in conjunction with Scotland's eight police forces during the long weekend (May 16 – 18). The weekend's focus on motorcyclists is concurrent with the International North West 200 motorcycle race being held in Ireland on Saturday, May 17.

“There will be hundreds of motorcyclists in south-western Scotland heading back through ferry ports on the weekend,” concluded Chief Superintendent McCormick. “We ask motorists to be extra vigilant during the weekend. We want everyone – motorists and motorcyclists alike - to enjoy their weekend on Scotland's country roads and make it home safely.”

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NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS:

For further information or to arrange an interview with Chief Superintendent Michael McCormick, please contact Graham MacDonell at ACPOS Communications on 0141 435 1241 or 07771 842 881 after hours.