



ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS IN SCOTLAND

NEWS RELEASE

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

SAFER TO DRIVE IN SCOTLAND – EXCEPT FOR BIKERS

SCOTLAND has become a safer place in which to drive for every type of road user according to government statistics – except for motorcyclists.

As summer-like weather is being experienced in many places throughout the country this Spring, more motorcyclists are taking to the country's roads ahead of the usual biking season. With the deaths of five bikers last week, motorists and motorcyclists are being urged to take extra care by the road policing officers as they focus on motorcycle safety as part of a 'Country Roads Weekend' for the next three days in all eight Scottish police force areas..

"We would like to remind all motorists that as summertime approaches, we will be seeing better weather, more hours of daylight and more motorcyclists out for their first runs of the season," said Assistant Chief Constable Gordon MacKenzie (Central Scotland Police), Chair of the Road User Management & Road Crime Reduction Portfolio for the Road Policing Business Area of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS). "And a percentage of those motorcyclists will be from continental Europe who may be unfamiliar with many of our country roads.

"Statistics published by the Scottish Government show that motorcycles are involved in twice as many injury road collisions than their make-up as road users," Mr. MacKenzie continued. "This is a safety issue that has to be addressed by both motorcyclists as well as other road users as the Department for Transport (DfT) research shows that about 40 per cent of motorcycle fatalities involve a car driver failing to see an approaching motorcycle when looking for on-coming traffic.

"While the number of road collisions has fallen since 1997 and the number of seriously injured persons has dropped considerably, two anomalies stand out," he stressed. "Collisions and injuries on non-built up and/or country roads have not decreased as much as on built up roads and the number collisions involving motorcyclists has hardly dropped at all."

In 2000, the Scottish Government set targets for reducing road accident casualties, and those targets will be readily realised by next year in the reduction of the number of people and children killed or seriously injured in road collisions as well as in the slight casualty rate category.

"Efforts by the Scottish and UK governments and Scotland's eight police forces and all of our partners since 2000 have made our country's roads a lot safer for everyone – whether they are driving, cycling or walking," ACC MacKenzie concluded. "We want everyone to be safe using our country's roads – and that includes motorcyclists."

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For further information, contact:

Graham MacDonell, Communications Officer, ACPOS
0141 435 1241 (office)
07771 842 881 (out-of-hours)

Notes to Editors:

ACC Gordon MacKenzie will not be available for interviews on Thursday nor on Friday; media inquiries should be directed to the local Police Force's Road Policing Department through their media or press offices instead.

The ACPOS co-ordinated highlighting of concerns on country road users, including motorcyclists, will start at 07:00 hours on Friday, 27 March and run until 07:00 hours on Monday, 30 March.

According to Department for Transport (DfT) Vehicle Licensing Statistics for 2007, there were the following numbers of vehicles licensed in Scotland:

- 2,216,000 cars
- 70,000 motorcycles
- 237,000 light goods vehicles
- 39,000 heavy goods vehicles
- 18,000 buses and coaches
- 68,000 other vehicles

for a total of 2,648,000 vehicles.

Information on 'Injury Road Accidents' can be found on the Scottish Government's website at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/12/22091243/85>

In one year alone - 2007 - there were 20,671 vehicles involved in injury road collisions by 15,484 cars (75%) and 1,096 motorcycles (5%). Of all the vehicles registered in Scotland in 2007 (over 2,648,000), cars comprised 83.7 per cent of the total (2,216,000) while the 70,000 licensed motorcycles only comprised 2.7 per cent. The totals for road collisions also incorporate vehicles registered outwith Scotland and the UK.

This will be the last of four '*Country Roads Weekends*' of the 2008-09 fiscal year for ACPOS and will coincide with the start of British Summertime when clocks are moved ahead one hour.

Research conducted by THINK!, the road safety arm of the DfT has shown that injuries to motorcyclists are far out of proportion to their presence on our roads.

Additional information can be obtained at:

http://www.dft.gov.uk/think/focusareas/motorcycling?whoareyou_id=&page=Overview