

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

**Chief John R. Batiste**

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**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

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## **Motorcycle Riders Gear-up for Spring**

As the weather warms and the days grow longer more people are dusting off their motorcycles and taking to the highways. With the increased number of motorcyclists on the road, the number of motorcycle collisions is also increasing.

There have already been six fatalities involving motorcycles through February 29, 2008, compared to only two in same time period in 2006 and 2007. Of the six motorcycle fatalities in 2008, all but one of them has been caused by the motorcycle rider.

"We used to think that most motorcycle collisions were caused by 'the other guy,'" said WSP Chief John R. Batiste. "That's no longer the case. Today, the riders themselves are responsible for the majority of these crashes, and that's entirely preventable."

The primary causes of motorcycle collisions are lane travel, speeding, alcohol, and inattention. The WSP will continue to be very active in dealing with these types of violations, as well as motorists who fail to yield the right of way to motorcyclists.

In 2007, the Washington State Patrol took a proactive role in trying to reduce the number of motorcycle collisions. Strong enforcement is thought to be one of the reasons there were 15 fewer motorcycle deaths in 2007 as compared to 2006.

There will also be a zero tolerance approach in dealing with failure to get a motorcycle license endorsement. If no alternative exists, troopers will impound the motorcycles of those driving without endorsements.

The Department of Licensing reported in 2006 there were 23,260 new motorcycle endorsements. In 2007 there were 26,397 new endorsements with 17,117 riders participating in the Washington Motorcycle Safety Training Program sponsored by the Department of Licensing.

Department of Licensing Director Liz Luce said, "I am encouraged that so many lives were saved last year, and it is not too early for riders to start thinking ahead for our riding season this year."

There are several steps riders can take that will greatly enhance their safety and enjoyment.

- Take an approved motorcycle training course and get a motorcycle endorsement;
- Don't ride after drinking alcohol;
- Drive at safe, legal speeds;
- Be visible with the headlight on, wear bright protective clothing;
- Wear a Department of Transportation approved motorcycle helmet.