



Chatham Borough Police Department

Traffic Safety Unit



Spring is in full swing and around the country, motorcyclists are returning to the road after a long winter. But with a sudden spike in the number of motorcycles on the road, it's a good time to remind all motorists, whether on two wheels or four, to keep a special lookout for motorcyclists.

That's why **May** is recognized as **National Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month**, a time for drivers to be reminded to share the road with motorcycles, and riders to be reminded to make themselves more visible to others.

Motorcyclists have all the same rights and privileges as any motor vehicle driver on the roadway. During Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month in May, and during the rest of the year, drivers of all other vehicles and all road users are reminded to safely "share the road" with motorcyclists, and to be extra alert to help keep motorcyclists safe.

Many motorcycle crashes happen because the driver of the vehicle does not see the motorcyclist. Why doesn't the average driver see a motorcyclist? Motorists tend to look for other cars and trucks. Also, because it is smaller than a car, a motorcycle is harder to see. Motorcyclists move differently than cars do. Motorcyclists shift positions to react to traffic, weather and road conditions. Motorcyclists and other drivers can benefit from these simple tips:

- Look out for motorcyclists. Be aware that although you may not see any cars or trucks, there may be an unnoticed motorcycle.
- Anticipate a motorcyclist's maneuver. Motorcyclists may change positions within a lane to respond to road conditions, weather or other factors.
- Signal your intentions. Even if you don't see cars in front or behind you, look carefully in all directions for approaching motorcyclists.
- Respect a motorcycle. Treat motorcycles as a full-sized vehicle with equal rights to the road. Give motorcycles a full lane.
- Allow plenty of space when following a motorcycle. The slightest contact can mean a spill and/or injury for the rider.

You can **DRIVE AWARE** of motorcyclists and the situations where crashes are likely to occur.

Drivers also contribute to motorcycle crashes where the motorcycle never makes contact with the car. Drivers who unintentionally pull out in front of a motorcycle often force the rider to over-brake, slide and fall.

Crashes are most likely to occur in these high-risk situation:

- **Left Turns** –The most common type of crash involving a car and a motorcycle is at an intersection when the automobile driver is making a left turn in front of a motorcycle.
- **Car's Blind Spot** – Motorcyclists riding alongside a lane of cars are often out of view of the automobile driver. An unsuspecting driver may collide with a motorcyclist as the driver tries to change lanes.
- **Hazardous Road Conditions** – Motorcyclists have to be much more concerned about road surfaces than drivers do. A motorcyclist may have to slow down or change lanes to avoid road obstructions such as potholes and road debris.
- **Weather Conditions** –When the road surface is wet or icy, a motorcycle's braking and handling are impaired. A strong gust of wind can move a motorcycle across an entire lane if the rider isn't prepared for it. Wind gusts from large trucks in the other lane can also be a real hazard.
- **Large Vehicles** – A large vehicle, such as an SUV or truck, can block a motorcycle from a driver's view. The motorcyclist may seem to suddenly appear from nowhere.

If you **DRIVE AWARE** of motorcyclists in these situations, you can help make the streets and roads.



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10 Reasons Why Motorists Don't See Motorcyclists Approaching

1. Camouflage: failure to pop out from background
2. Looming below threshold of detection
3. Threat seen but not identified as important
4. Expectation/rarity of encounter
5. Estimate speed less than actual
6. Negligence: did not look
7. Hidden: obstruction by foreground object
8. Physiology: bad eyesight, restricted movement
9. Memory recall: pop-out not retained
10. Chemical impairment: drink or drugs