



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

This Month: Look Twice, Safe a Life

PATTY RITCHIE May 11, 2015

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Did you know that motorcyclists are 30 times more likely than those traveling by car to die in a crash? According to the most recent numbers available from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, in 2013, there were more than 5,100 motorcycle crashes statewide. Those crashes resulted in 171 deaths and more than 5,000 injuries.

This month, we make an extra effort to increase the safety of our roadways through “Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month,” a time when those who travel our roadways are encouraged not only to be extra alert, but also to make an extra effort to learn how to more safely share the road with others. If you travel on four wheels, here are some safety tips for staying safe:

- While at intersections or before changing lanes, be sure to perform a visual check for motorcycles;
- Never attempt to share a lane with a motorcycle—always provide motorcyclists with a full lane to travel in;
- Never travel too closely to a motorcycle—in dry conditions, motorcycles are able to stop much more quickly than cars; and

- Never assume that motorcycles can maneuver quickly out of your way.

Making our roads safe is a team effort. If motorcycles are your main form of transportation, or you operate them as a pastime, here are some important safety tips to follow:

- Be sure to wear the appropriate safety gear, and bright colored clothing, which will allow drivers to see you better;
- If possible, avoid operating your motorcycle in poor weather conditions such as rain or high winds;
- Try to combine hand signals and turn signals, which will help to draw more attention to yourself;
- If you're new to motorcycling, be sure you have the proper safety training; and
- Don't follow other vehicles too closely—this will ensure you have enough stopping distance, as well as help you to avoid obstacles in the road, which can easily be straddled by cars, but pose major problems for those on two wheels.

I'm doing my part too to improve the safety of our roadways. This year, I once again introduced legislation to include a motorcycle safety and awareness component to the five-hour driving course all new drivers are required to take. This legislation—which has passed the Senate twice—will make our highways safer by teaching people how to properly share the road.

Whether you're behind the wheel or on a motorcycle, there are many steps we can take to ensure we all stay safe while traveling. As Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month continues, I encourage you to "look

twice, and save a life.”