

**West Traffic Division
Captain's Message
May 2018**

May is both “Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month” and “Bicycle Safety Month,” in which the primary goal is for motorists, bicyclists, and motorcyclists to safely share the road. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) sponsors Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. The Primary Message is: *Motorists: Share the Road With Motorcyclists and Scooter Riders.* The Primary Message for Bicycle Safety Month is: *Share the Road With Bicyclists.* “Click It or Ticket” National Enforcement Mobilization, Occupant Protection, sponsored by NHTSA, is scheduled to be held during the Month of May. The Primary Message for May regarding Impaired Driving is: *Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving.*

New laws pertaining to the operation of motorcycles have been passed. Vehicle Code Section 21658.1 provides for the legal operation of motorcycles commonly known as “Lane Splitting.” This new law allows the California Highway Patrol to enforce unsafe actions taken by vehicle drivers.

May is also “National Youth Traffic Safety Month,” sponsored by the National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS). NOYS is comprised of almost 70 national non-profit businesses, federal government agencies, and organizations that promote the health and safety of youth in the United States. Global Youth Traffic Safety Month, also in May, is supported by the United Nations General Assembly through the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020). Education in preventing unnecessary deaths is provided through these entities. In the Year 2012 alone, over 3,400 youth aged 15 to 20 years died in vehicle collisions in which their deaths could have easily been avoided. Of those who died, 55% were not wearing seatbelts, 48% of the drivers were speeding, 28% of drivers had been drinking alcoholic beverages, and 9% were distracted while driving.

West Traffic Division (WTD) personnel support these and additional NHTSA special events such as the “*Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest. National Crackdown.*” When each of these events is in progress, WTD personnel conduct additional education of the public and enforcement of laws in regards to the theme of each event. For more information please access NHTSA via the Internet at: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>.

Safety Alert

Paying particular attention to bicycle and motorcycle safety in the spring and summer often becomes an increasing necessity for the motoring public. These modes of transportation have become more popular with the onset of warmer and dryer weather and particularly with the rising cost of fuel. During the cooler and rainier winter months, drivers are less frequently exposed to these types of vehicles and by the start of the bicycle and motorcycle-riding season there is a tendency to no longer be on the lookout for them. This creates an additional danger to motorcycle and bicycle operators.

Motorcycles and bicycles are narrower in width, and their lower profiles make them much more difficult to see in surrounding traffic, particularly when traveling in a driver's "blind spot." During National Motorcycle Safety Month and National Bicycle Safety Month in May, additional traffic safety education and enforcement of applicable laws regarding registration and operation will be provided to the communities we serve. Riders are also reminded to be careful throughout the year.

A report on fatal single vehicle motorcycle collisions was previously released by NHTSA. Single vehicle collisions account for approximately 45 percent of all motorcyclist fatalities. More than 38,000 motorcyclists died in single vehicle motorcycle collisions between 1975 and 1999. Copies of this report and a preceding report on motorcycle fatalities may be obtained from the NHTSA by calling (202) 366-9550 or via the Internet at: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov> Another fact is that while motorcycle fatalities for the age groups of 30-39 and 40-49 have decreased, fatalities for the 50 and up age group have increased, partially due to "Baby-Boomers" riding sport bikes. If you or any of your loved ones elect to ride a motorcycle, be sure to take advantage of the valuable life-saving training offered by various entities such as the California Highway Patrol. Information regarding these types of safe-riding classes can be accessed on-line.

In addition to the enforcement efforts of all of the officers assigned to West Traffic Division, a special unit of officers known as the Driving Under Influence (DUI) Task Force is also deployed whose primary function is the direct enforcement of laws prohibiting driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. The combined enforcement efforts of all of WTD's officers serve to educate the public, decrease the incidence of crime and maintain focus on impacting the number of tragic collisions with strategic enforcement.

The Community Traffic Services Unit (CTSU) is another specialized unit operating as a significant part of WTD as problem solvers for particular community concerns. If you have a traffic safety concern in a particular area, you may contact the CTSU at (213) 473-0215 or WTD desk at (213) 473-0222 to voice your concerns. You are also encouraged to view the CTSU's WebPage, listed under the About West Traffic section.

Operations-West Bureau consists of WTD, Hollywood, Wilshire, West Los Angeles, Pacific, and Olympic Areas. Any of the geographical Areas' WebPages can be accessed via the WTD homepage. You are also encouraged to monitor the Crime Prevention Circular for the Areas that are of particular interest to you.

Captain Gary Walters
Commanding Officer
West Traffic Division

Traffic Tips

- * **Wear your seatbelt.**
- * **Don't drink and drive.**
- * **Don't use handheld equipment such as a cell phone or GPS while driving.**
- * **Look both ways twice before crossing the street.**
- * **Please slow down. Speed kills.**