

Watchwords by Officer Tom Hanshaw
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Although you may not realize it as you're driving along the roadways of our community, motorists share the way with many types of traffic. As the weather continues to become more summer-like, the amount of traffic within and passing through is steadily increasing by the day. It's a combination of passenger vehicles, trucks, motorcycles, bicycles and even pedestrians that requires motorists to stay focused and alert. Distracted driving continues to be a serious concern for all types of traffic but especially to those without the protection; motorcycles and bicycles. A crash involving a two-wheeled vehicle can cause serious injury or worse to the rider. This week I'd like to ask readers to "look twice" because it may just "save a life."

Now that the streets have been swept and the temperature is consistently warmer, "motorcycles are everywhere." In fact, there are more motorcycles registered today than ever before and riders represent just about every age group. As gasoline prices continue to rise, riding a motorcycle has also become a great way to save money. Unlike a passenger vehicle, however, motorcycles do not have thousands of pounds of steel to protect the operator. Riders must be very cautious, always alert to their surroundings and practice defensive driving techniques. They should leave extra distance between vehicles, avoid blind spots and anticipate a potential hazard, such as a quick turn. It's never a good idea to challenge anyone on the roadway, road rage can lead to a crash or physical altercation; neither of which is safe. Certain situations, such as riding at night, in poor weather or in heavy traffic, present additional dangers, so stay alert. Of course, alcohol consumption and motorcycles don't mix, never drink and drive. Helmets are required by law in Massachusetts but also a smart practice to follow.

Motorists have a responsibility when it comes to motorcycles too. Leave plenty of space between your car and a motorcycle, yield when possible and never make a quick turn if one is approaching. Be sure to check twice before changing lanes, motorcycles can be difficult to see when in the blind spot. If a rider suddenly makes an excessive noise on his or her bike, it's likely they are giving you and other motorists a reminder of their presence.

Looking for a fun and inexpensive thing to do on Sunday, June 10th? Check out the 2nd annual Family Fun Day at the Amesbury Sports Park on South Hunt Rd to benefit the Amesbury Police Officers' Association. We'll have games, raffles, music, food and more to support the charities of the APOA. The Family Fair will be held, rain or shine, at the Sports Park from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Be sure to stop by, check out the dunk-tank, enormous bouncy house, carnival games, raffle with great prizes, BBQ and more. The money raised will benefit local charities, school programs; youth sports teams, community events and efforts to make Amesbury a safer and better city. On behalf of the Amesbury Police Officers' Association, I would like express special thanks to the owners and staff of the Amesbury Sports Park for allowing us to use their facilities.