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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2018PSSG0065-001652  
Aug. 29, 2018

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
BC Coroners Service

### **Motorcycle deaths more than double through first seven months of 2018**

VICTORIA – Following a spike in motorcyclist deaths this summer, the BC Coroners Service is reminding all road users to be cautious and safe on the long weekend, given the expected increased activity on provincial roads and highways.

Based on preliminary data, 30 people died in motorcycle crashes from January through July 2018, with 18 in July alone. This is more than double the number of motorcycle-involved deaths occurring from January to July 2017.

“BC Coroners Service data signals a significant increase in deaths involving motorcyclists this summer,” said Lisa Lapointe, chief coroner. “Our goal is to prevent deaths in similar circumstances by raising awareness of the fatalities and sharing preventative measures, so everyone can get to their destination safely. We urge all drivers on B.C. roadways to exercise caution and take time to plan ahead.”

Key trends in motorcycle fatalities over the past decade include:

- Motorcyclist speed and impairment continue to be the leading contributing factors;
- The majority (83%) of decedents resided in B.C.;
- Nine in every 10 decedents were male; and,
- The Interior and Fraser health authority regions had the highest number of motorcyclist deaths (in 2018 to date, 12 and 10 deaths respectively — making up 73% of all motorcyclist deaths).

A detailed BC Coroners Service study of the factors that contributed to motorcycling deaths in all concluded investigations from 2008 through 2018 found that, overall, factors relating to the motorcyclist and/or motorcycle contributed to 70% of all fatalities. The study found that motorcyclist speed and motorcyclist impairment were each contributory to more than one-third of all deaths.

The study also found that environmental factors, such as slippery roads, contributed to 23% of the deaths, and factors related to other motor vehicles and their drivers contributed to 14%.

Over the past decade, more than half of decedents were injured in the summer months, and motorcyclists were more likely to be injured on Saturdays (25% of deaths) and Sundays (20% of deaths) than on the other five days of the week.

“The British Columbia Coalition of Motorcyclists has been deeply concerned and saddened by the alarming amount of fatalities involving motorcyclists this year,” said Tara Briscoe, manager, BC Coalition of Motorcyclists. “We hope that by raising public awareness on the matter that this number will decrease and that we can finish this riding season with fewer casualties.”

Everyone deserves to make it home to their families after a ride.”

“Speed is the leading factor for motorcycle crashes,” added Lindsay Matthews, ICBC’s interim vice-president responsible for road safety. “It makes it difficult to respond to unexpected events, or to correct for errors. ICBC strongly encourages motorcyclists to keep within posted speed limits at all times, and to wear full protective gear to protect themselves in the event of a crash.”

**Learn More:**

Updated statistical report on motorcyclist deaths from January 2008 – July 2018:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/mvi-motorcyclist.pdf>

ICBC tips for motorcycle safety: <https://www.icbc.com/road-safety/sharing/motorcycle-safety/Pages/Default.aspx>

ICBC sharing the road video: <https://youtu.be/QITQrTVrNSc>

A backgrounder follows.

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## BACKGROUND

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### **Tips for motorcycle safety**

The following tips are for both motorcyclists and car drivers to help make roads safer for everyone:

Tips for the motorcyclist community:

- Riders need to keep within the posted speed limits and make sure to slow down before entering curves.
- Prior to reaching a curve, plan your path through it. Reduce your speed and adjust your lane position. Always look in the direction of where you want to go. If you need to brake, remember to straighten up first.
- When approaching an intersection, especially where oncoming traffic is waiting to turn left, adjust your lane position and reduce your speed so you will have an escape path or time to stop if you need it.
- Read the drivers' language: never assume they have seen you or will give you the right-of-way. They may not accurately judge your distance or speed of approach. Do your best to stay out of drivers' blind spots.
- To refresh your manoeuvres, practise in a closed course like an empty parking lot, or sign up for a local motorcycle-skills training session.
- Whether it is your first ride or daily commute, tune up on the rules of the road with ICBC's Learn to Ride Smart guide.
- Avoid riding in the centre of the lane (where oil and other fluids gather), or on painted road markers.
- When slowing or stopping in traffic, lightly tap your brakes two or three times to alert drivers behind you.
- Remember to share the road and respect the rights of other road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles.
- Wear the appropriate motorcycle gear. Always wearing a helmet that meets DOT, Snell or ECE safety standards, and safety gear designed for riding. Choose gear that gives you the best chance of being seen: bright colours and reflective materials.
- Ride defensively, and do not assume that all car drivers can see you.
- Use extra caution in all intersections.
- Look where you want to go and watch out for road hazards.
- Abide by the rules of the road.

Tips for car drivers:

- Do not pull out in front of a motorcycle and use your signals every time you are about to switch lanes.
- Be diligent with your shoulder-checking.

- Use extra caution in all intersections. Scan intersections and look carefully for motorcycles. When turning left, look for oncoming motorcycles.
- Stay focused and avoid distractions that take your mind off driving and your eyes off the road. Put any phone or handheld device down.
- Motorcycles are far more difficult to see than other vehicles. It is easy to misjudge a motorcycle's speed and distance. All car drivers should take that extra few seconds to look left, look right and look left again, before making a turn.
- Tailgating and aggressive driving is far more dangerous to a motorcyclist because they have less protection; please give them more space than you would another car.
- Watch carefully for motorcycles as they're harder to see at dusk, at night, in bad weather and heavy traffic.
- Give lots of space when passing a motorcycle and allow at least three seconds following distance when you are behind a motorcycle.
- Make eye contact whenever possible to let motorcyclists know that you have seen them.
- Always share the road with motorcycles. The safest choice is to yield the right-of-way to an oncoming rider as it can be hard to tell how fast they are travelling.

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