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Cops urge drivers, cyclists to share road

Halton Police remind area residents that cyclists and motor vehicles must share the roads after several recent accidents including one in Burlington that resulted in the death of a female cyclist.

Police say there have been six serious injury collisions involving vehicles and cyclists in Halton. In April a 36-year-old woman was injured, and later died, after she lost control of her bike and slid into the path of an oncoming car.

"The rural roads in the Region of Halton offer a scenic yet demanding training ground for the avid cyclist," said Deputy Chief Robert Percy. "Whether you are driving a motor vehicle or riding a bike, everyone must respect the rules of the road or we will continue to experience these preventable and needless accidents."

Police say speed, not sharing the roadway, not wearing a helmet and failing to obey the rules of the road were contributing factors in the six accidents.

Police consider road safety as a top priority and offer the following safety tips for cyclists and motorists:

- Safety starts before you even get on your bicycle. Always wear a properly fitted helmet, reflective or bright clothing and make sure your bicycle has been properly maintained.

- Under the Highway Traffic Act, a bicycle is considered a vehicle. As such, cyclists have the same privileges that come along with that but also the same obligation to abide by the rules of the road.

- When riding at night your bicycle must have a white or amber light to the front and a red light or an approved reflector to the rear.

- While on a roadway, cyclists must ride in the same direction as traffic. This makes you visible to drivers entering roadways or changing lanes.

- To maximize cyclist safety, ride in single file when riding in a group. In certain circumstances, cyclists may ride in tandem, particularly in large riding groups. However they must ride as close as practical to the right edge of the road except for passing or turning left.

- Motorists need to be patient when passing a cyclist. Slow down and pass only when it is safe to do so, a clearance of at least three feet when passing a bicycle is recommended.

- Traffic lights and signs must be obeyed by everyone operating a vehicle on a roadway. Remember a yellow light means prepare to stop, not speed up.

- Always signal your intention to turn.

- Be vigilant— just because you can see a vehicle coming doesn't mean that they see you

Police remind everyone that as children head back to school attention to bicycles and pedestrians must be at its highest level to drive and ride responsibly.

The bottom line is that cyclists and motorists both have a right to enjoy our roads. Safety must always be the overriding factor in everyone's driving habits.



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