

## **Hitting the Road this Long Weekend**

**(Burnaby, BC)** – The high price of gas and good weather will see many people hit the road on a motorcycle this long weekend, and throughout the summer. Motorcycle riders are among the most vulnerable road users in British Columbia and increasingly “hitting the road” is becoming a literal term when it comes to motorcycle riding.

With motorcycle crashes on the rise, Allan Lamb, BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation’s executive director says that it is time for all riders and drivers to pay attention and be aware of each other. “Motorcycles are not easily seen. Many crashes involving motorcycles are due to speed, but a significant number occur at intersections where drivers fail to yield to the right of way of the motorcycle.”

Data from the Chief Coroner of B.C. indicates that 341 motorcycle riders were killed in B.C. between 1998 and 2007. While 25 riders were killed in 1998, 44 riders were killed in 2007.

The Canada Safety Council says the image of the typical motorcyclist is changing. There are more middle-aged riders, often referred to as “rubies” (rich urban bikers), taking to the road. Regardless of age today’s motorcyclist is generally a safer rider than generations past with almost seventy percent of all newly licensed motorcyclists in Canada having taken the Canada Safety Council’s *Gearing Up* training course.

Allan Lamb agrees and advises, “that for middle age riders who perhaps have not driven a motorcycle for many years or ride very infrequently during the summer season, a refresher course – even every spring - could save your life.”

Lamb says there is also a message for parents when it comes to young riders. The majority of motorcycle crashes still involve young and new riders. Next to speed, inattention and inexperience are the most significant contributing factors in a motorcycle crash. “We ask that parents get involved and stay involved with the young adults as they are the most likely to become involved in a crash before the ages of 25,” says Lamb.

During the ten-year period from 1998 to 2007, 86 of the 341 fatalities were motorcycle riders aged 16 – 25. Given that motorcycle riders in that age group account for only an estimated 2.4 % of licensed motorcyclists this means that this group had a fatality rate approximately 1,200 percent higher than those over age 25.

Young drivers in B.C. who have already gone through the Graduated Licensing Program to drive a car don’t have to repeat the process if they opt to start riding a motorcycle. Lamb suggests that a graduating licensing program similar to the European model, that

restricts engine size, be made mandatory for young people in applying for a motorcycle license regardless.

**The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation offers some tips for staying safe on a motorcycle:**

- Make eye contact – make sure that the other driver or rider sees you
- Pay attention – pay attention to the signals of other drivers and make your intention clear.
- Watch for left turning vehicles at intersections
- Be aware of hazardous road conditions – wet roads, sand, gravel, potholes and other hazards may cause a motorcycle to fall.
- Pay attention to posted speeds and watch the road ahead – reduce speed on curves and watch for oncoming vehicles. Many crashes happen when a rider overshoots the road ahead or crosses the centre line.
- Wear protective clothing – wear clothing designed for motorcycle riders that is “armoured” bright and reflective.
- **WEAR A HELMET** – Helmets are mandatory in B.C. and prevent head injuries in 67 percent of crashes and 29 per cent of deaths. Make sure your helmet meets current safety standards.
- **NEVER drive a car or a motorcycle while impaired** – Driving is impaired when the ability to do so is affected by any substance or condition that changes the mood or perception of reality of the driver. Alcohol or drugs, illicit or prescription, and even fatigue and stress will impair your driving. A combination of any or all of these things can be deadly.

# #

**Available for Interview:**

Allan Lamb, Executive Director for the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation

**About BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation**

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is a non-profit registered charity working with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. For more information visit [www.BCAATSF.ca](http://www.BCAATSF.ca) or call 604-298-5107.

**URL for this media release is:** <http://www.tsfbcaa.com/content/custompages/news.aspx>

***DRIVE TO SAVE LIVES***  
**www.BCAATSF.ca**

**For further information, contact:**

Lennea Durant  
Media Relations  
BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation  
Tel: 604-875-1182  
E-mail: [lenneadurant@shaw.ca](mailto:lenneadurant@shaw.ca)

Allan Lamb  
Executive Director  
BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation  
Tel: 604-297-2151  
E-mail: [allan.lamb@tsf-bcaa.com](mailto:allan.lamb@tsf-bcaa.com)