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PRESS RELEASE

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May is Bike Safety Month

Sacramento, CA – The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) today called upon bicycle riders and motorists alike to be cautious during May, National Bicycle Safety Month, and every other month during the year.

The total number of bicycle deaths in California have remained flat for the last two reporting years, while injuries have increased 4.6 percent. Encouragingly, deaths and injuries for bicycle riders under age 15 have continued to fall. OTS partners with other state departments, bicycle advocates and local agencies in an ongoing, multi-faceted campaign for bicycle safety through the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

“Bike Month is a great occasion for Californians, whether out with friends or family or on their own, to strap on a helmet, hop on a bike, and see just how fun and welcoming our streets and bike paths have become,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the Office of Traffic Safety. “Californians now see biking as a real transportation option. The key is to ensure that biking is safe for everyone.”

Bicycles are associated with more childhood injuries than any other consumer product except automobiles. Child bicycling deaths can increase 45 percent above the month average in the summer. More adults are choosing bicycles, both for commuting to work and for exercise.

Learning how to ride a bike is a rite of passage in childhood, and often reintroduced to adults. Here are some important things for you or your child to consider before jumping on that bike:

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Helmets – Every Time, Every Trip

- Make it a rule: every time you and your child ride a bike, wear a bicycle helmet that meets the safety standards developed by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. It's your main source of protection in a crash or spill.
- If your child is reluctant to wear a helmet, try letting him or her choose their own.
- Make sure the helmet fits and that everyone knows how to put it on correctly. A helmet should sit on top of the head in a level position, and should not rock forward, backward or side to side. The helmet straps must always be buckled but not too tightly.
- *EYES check*: Position the helmet on your head. Look up and you should see the bottom rim of the helmet. The rim should be one to two finger-widths above the eyebrows.
- *EARS check*: Make sure the straps of the helmet form a "V" under your ears when buckled. The strap should be snug but comfortable.
- *MOUTH check*: Open your mouth as wide as you can. Do you feel the helmet hug your head?

The Right Bike

- Ensure proper bike type, size and fit. Get help from an expert or read up on your own before choosing a bike. Bring your child along when shopping for a bike for them. Buy a bicycle that is the right size for the child, not one he will grow into. When sitting on the seat, the child's feet should be able to touch the ground.
- Make sure the reflectors are secure, brakes work properly, gears shift smoothly and tires are tightly secured and properly inflated.

Ride Safe

- Ride Wisely. You are a vehicle. Learn and follow all laws.
- Be Predictable. Act like a driver of a motor vehicle.
- Be Visible. See and be seen at all times.
- Stay Focused. Stay alert.

Drive Safe

- Motorists need to safely share the road.
- Don't crowd bicyclists.
- Keep an eye out for bicyclists, as well as motorcycles and pedestrians.

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