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For More Information: Stan Porter
(503) 986-4198

New laws enhance motorcycle visibility

Three new laws passed during the 2003 legislative session allow motorcyclists to become more visible to other highway users. The laws went into effect Jan. 1, 2004.

“If people obey these new laws, we will all be safer,” said Stan Porter, manager of Motorcycle Safety and Vehicle Safety Standards Programs for ODOT. “Visibility is especially important for motorcyclists.”

The three new changes are:

- Motorcyclists can now use three headlights on their motorcycles whereas in the past two was the maximum allowed.
- Motorcyclists will also be able to use auxiliary lights, either fog lights or driving lights, at all times if the auxiliary lights are no brighter than the headlight and the auxiliary lights are aimed correctly. All other vehicles in Oregon must turn off their auxiliary lights during times when the law requires drivers to dim their high beam headlights.
- Motorcyclists may use an intermittent pulsing or flashing brake light as long as the flashing does not interfere with the rear turn signal function.

These new regulations were passed at the request of the Governor’s Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety, the Oregon State Police Motorcycle Unit, the TEAM OREGON Motorcycle Safety Program and by Oregon motorcyclists.

“All three of these new laws will allow the motorcyclist to be more easily seen by other highway users,” Porter said. “The addition of one more headlight and the use of auxiliary lights at all times will allow the motorcyclist to see better at night and during times of limited visibility. The

flashing brake light will certainly gain the attention of those highway users behind motorcyclists,” Porter added.

Porter said, “The Legislature was very supportive of enhancing the ability of motorcyclists to become more visible to other highway users. With the help of Legislators that are motorcyclists themselves, these new options were passed and signed by Governor Kulongoski,” Porter added.

If you have questions about these or other equipment laws, please visit the Equipment Program Web page link: http://www.odot.state.or.us/transafety/Veh_Equipment.htm.

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