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Motorists and cyclists share responsibility on our roads

Edmonton... Motorists are reminded to use caution and share the road with cyclists across the province. Cyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers, so whether they commute to work or ride for recreation, cyclists can be on the road at any time of the day or night and in any kind of weather. With school out for summer, motorists are urged to take extra caution as more young children will be out riding their bikes.

Motorists need to:

- Recognize the hand signals that cyclists use and be prepared to slow down or stop. Avoid loud music and other distracting activities when approaching cyclists. Check for bicycles in the side view mirror before opening vehicle doors when parking alongside the curb.
- Be aware of what is happening around you. Obey posted speed limits and use caution when approaching intersections. Shoulder check before pulling away from the curb or when changing lanes. Check blind spots when turning left or right. Make eye contact as cyclists often use this as a means of communication.
- Drive defensively and do not follow too closely or crowd the cyclist as it may distract him or her from the road and traffic ahead. Allow more following distance when the road is slippery or wet. When passing a cyclist, leave a safe distance between the vehicle and the bicycle and pass at a moderate speed.
- Be courteous and avoid honking because it could startle the cyclist and even cause him or her to fall. Change lanes on a multi-lane road, if possible, rather than risk crowding the cyclist. Drivers of larger vehicles should be cautious of the wind they create when passing a cyclist, especially on dusty roads. Slow down and do your best to avoid puddles when passing cyclists.

Cyclists need to:

- Be predictable and let other road users know what you are going to do by using hand signals to warn drivers of all intended lane changes, turns and stops.
- Be visible, always. Wear bright or reflective clothing, especially at night or in poor weather. Avoid riding in vehicles' blind spots. Don't dodge between parked cars. Ride in a straight line and close to the curb or edge of the road.
- Ride defensively and look well ahead. Use caution when crossing intersections. Scan the road behind by shoulder checking regularly or use a rearview mirror. Recognize and be careful of the blind spots around cars, trucks and buses. If possible, avoid busy streets. Don't wear headphones, as you may not be able to hear a horn or an oncoming vehicle.
- Ride legally. In Alberta, if you are under 18, you must wear an approved bicycle helmet. For safety purposes, it is recommended that all cyclists wear a helmet. If you ride at night, your bicycle must be equipped with a front headlight, rear red light and a red rear reflector. Just like motorists, cyclists must obey all the rules of the road. Cyclists have the same privileges and responsibilities as motorists. Know the bylaws in your municipality with regards to riding on sidewalks.

Good drivers are considerate of other road users, including cyclists. Sharing the road is an essential rule that everyone needs to remember and abide by.

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