

## For Immediate Release

### Tips to Help Chicago-area Motorcyclists Safely Navigate Hazardous Roadways During Motorcycle Awareness Month (May)

*Avid motorcyclist and surgeon, Dr. David Hanson marks upcoming Motorcycle Awareness Month with tips to help fellow riders avoid potholes, distractions and bad drivers.*

(CHICAGO, April 29, 2009) – May marks Motorcycle Awareness Month. After one of the longest and coldest winters in recent memory, Chicagoans are more than ready to hit the beaches, parks and roads. But for motorcycle riders, the roads are literally minefields. Several accidents have already been caused by some of the millions of cavernous potholes marring Chicago-area streets, highways and thoroughfares.

Dr. David Hanson is an [oral and maxillofacial surgeon](#) and co-founder of [Lincoln Park Institute for Oral and Cosmetic Surgery](#). As an avid rider, Hanson has dealt firsthand with fellow riders who have sustained serious injuries from motorcycle accidents, and hopes that he won't have to treat many more patients this season given the state of Chicago-area roadways.

“The roadways are in a pretty sorry state right now, and it will probably be a while before all the potholes are repaired,” Dr. Hanson stated. “Riders are going to have to be more cautious this season and helmets are good idea now more than ever.”

On average, Hanson says he treats about four patients each year with severe face and jaw trauma and skull fractures due to motorcycle accidents. The majority of those patients have either impacted the pavement directly with their faces or have had their faces fractured after the initial impact. But according to Hanson, many more motorcycle accident victims never make it (to him) since they tend to be people that weren't wearing protective gear or may have just been victims of careless drivers and road conditions.

“My work generally starts once the patient has been stabilized, which would entail relieving cranial pressure resulting from the accident,” Hanson said. “Although it seems a bit strange to say, the patients that make it to my practice are the lucky ones, and most of those riders are people that wore helmets.”

But Hanson said helmets are only one part of the equation – a critical part, but not the only important safety consideration. To help riders avoid an unnecessary trip to his office, Hanson offers the following tips to motorcycle enthusiasts of all levels.

#### Tips for an Accident-Free Motorcyclist Season

**Take a “Rider Course”:** The Motorcycle Safety [www.msfsa.org](http://www.msfsa.org)) sponsors beginner and advanced courses at very reasonable fees. Beginners need to learn the basics of handling their bike and dealing with traffic. Seasoned riders always need to refresh critical skills and share “on-the-road” experiences. Also, most insurance companies offer discounts to riders who demonstrate successful course completion.

**Wear Protective Gear:** Helmets unconditionally save lives. Although only required in 17 states, from a facial surgeon's point of view, wearing a helmet is a “no brainer.” In addition, proper eye and footwear (above-the-ankle coverage), jeans and/or leathers are preferred.

***NEVER Tailgate or ALLOW Tailgating:*** Potholes, especially this season, are everywhere and we need time to react. In addition to your personal safety, think about the potential damage to your bike.

***Know Your Limitations:*** There is never a need to “show off” or push to keep up with the group. You can always catch up with friends at the next planned stop.

***Know Your Machine:*** Inasmuch as we trust our lives to our abilities and the bike we are on, a quick “once over” is well worth the time investment. Checking the tires for pressure and defects beats the heck out of a blow out at 65mph (or even 55, 43, 35, 27 etc). A quick look at fluids, cables, lights, gear tie down, etc, can prove both time and life saving.

***Leave Yourself a Way Out!*** Evasive maneuvers may someday save your life. Practice avoidance maneuvers when no one is around. At stop lights, point your bike in such a way that if the guy behind you comes on strong, as if not seeing you, you can get out of the way.

***Stay Visible:*** Most motor vehicle vs. motorcycle collisions occur because the auto driver “didn’t see the biker.” Always position yourself so that oncoming traffic and other cars can see you. Consider wearing clothing that makes you more visible. Make sure your head and tail lights are bright.

***NEVER Drink & Ride:*** This should be pretty much self-explanatory.

Hanson says following these tips will exponentially increase the likelihood of an accident-free riding season. Adding, “put on your helmet, if not for yourself then for the people that care about you.”

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