Drivers Urged to be aware of cyclists during National Bikeweek & to give them the space to ride safe

- National Bike Week runs from Saturday 9 June to Sunday 17 June
- Drivers reminded to give cyclists safe clearance space when overtaking
- Check blind spots for cyclists and use ‘Dutch Reach’ when opening the door
- Cyclists reminded that Rules of the Road apply to them too

Thursday 7 June, 2018 - The Road Safety Authority (RSA), Cyclist.ie the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network, Department of Transport Tourism and Sport, and An Garda Síochána are urging drivers, in the run up to National Bike Week which runs from Saturday 9 June to Sunday 17 June, to be aware of cyclists and to give them the space to ride safe when overtaking. Cyclists are also being reminded to follow the Rules of the Road.

All road users need to be aware there will be an increase in the number of cyclists on the road over this period, drivers in particular are asked to treat them with respect and to share the road safely - not only during the upcoming National Bike Week, but every day of the year.

The organisations have three important pieces of advice for drivers.
· Give cyclists the space to ride safe when overtaking them. (1 metre in speed zones under 80km/h and 1.5 metres in zones over 80km/h). Cyclists can be thrown off course by sudden gusts of wind or when having to avoid uneven road surfaces.

· Check mirrors regularly. Remember a cyclist could be in your blind spot, look carefully before making your manoeuvre.

· If you or passengers are getting out of the vehicle make sure you check for passing cyclists before opening the door.

The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Mr. Shane Ross TD said that “National Bike Week is a great way to get out and about for air and exercise, particularly in the summer sunshine. I would encourage everyone to use the road safely, look out for each other and enjoy the various activities taking place all around the country. Let’s make them memorable events for the right reasons.”

Ms Moyagh Murdock, Chief Executive of the RSA appealed to drivers to be on guard for cyclists using the roads. “You need to allow extra space when overtaking a cyclist and always anticipate a cyclist having to make a sudden move to avoid a pothole or obstruction. It’s also important to watch out for cyclists at junctions especially when turning left and when pulling away from the kerb.”

She added that “Something else we are going to be hearing a lot more about in this country is the ‘Dutch Reach’. It’s the way people in Holland have been taught for years to open the door of a car to avoiding hitting a passing cyclist. Instead of opening the door with the hand closest the door, use the hand that’s furthest away. This forces you to swivel and look in your wing mirror and blind spot before opening the door, allowing you to see if there are any cyclists approaching.”

Mr. Colm Ryder, Chairperson of Cyclist.ie, the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network, said: ‘National Bikeweek is a great celebration of the bicycle and hundreds of events will be taking place around the country. There is an event near you somewhere! So why not leave the car at home if you can this week, and get on your bike? However you are travelling make sure to be safe, drive slowly, and respect other road users at all times”

Assistant Commissioner, David Sheahan, Garda National Roads Policing Unit said, “An Garda Síochána would like to echo what has already been said in that cycling should be a fun and
safe pastime but unfortunately mistakes are made which lead to sometimes serious and even fatal injury. While drivers have a duty of care to cyclists and need to follow the rules of the road, equally cyclists need to do the same. This starts with the bike. You need to ensure it is roadworthy and be in good working order to include brakes, tyres, chain, and have lights and have reflectors. You should wear reflective clothing and always wear a helmet when cycling.”

He added that cyclists should "Never cycle more than two abreast and always cycle single-file when overtaking. This is for your safety but also to be considerate to other road users. It’s also important to never take up a position on the ‘inside’ of a large vehicle when they are turning left as you may be in their blind spot.”

National Bike Week is a celebration and promotion of all that is great about bikes and cycling held over a week in June of each year with bike themed events organised by local authorities, community groups and cycling groups throughout Ireland. For more details on National Bike Week and to find an event near you visit www.bikeweek.ie

ENDS

For further information please contact:

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Garda Press Office:  01 666 20 30

Editors Notes

Collisions and injuries involving pedal cyclists

Six cyclists have been killed on the nation’s roads to date in 2018. There were 15 cyclist deaths in 2017 which represented a 50% increase in cyclist fatalities.
Over the period 2011 – 2016 there were 4,404 cyclist casualties in 4,381 collisions recorded. From 2011 to 2017, there were 69 cyclists killed. The 2014 and 2015 figures are not directly comparable to the number prior to 2014 due to the system change described\(^1\). This does constitute a trend break across this time period.

Table 1. Number of casualty collisions\(^2\) and cyclists killed and injured 2011 – 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014*</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016^</th>
<th>2017^</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cyclist casualty</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>collisions</strong></td>
<td>400</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number killed</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number injured</strong></td>
<td>395</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4,404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*break in the series, ^provisional and subject to change

The percentage share of pedal cyclist injuries compared to injuries sustained by other road users (excluding fatalities) increased from 5% to 9% between 2011 and 2013. The 2014 and 2015 figures are not directly comparable to the number prior to 2014 due to the system change\(^1\) but on average represented 11% of all injuries reported.

\(^1\) Significant changes were made in 2014 to the mechanism by which collision data is transferred by AGS to the RSA including the addition of new variables, changes to existing variables and introduction of a two-way validation process.

\(^2\) Casualty collisions include fatal, serious and minor injury collisions.

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