

ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT SPECIAL MEDIA RELEASE
04 September 2014 – prepared by Lt. Don Eckert

BICYCLE SAFETY

The Athens-Clarke County Police Department's Traffic Unit is focusing efforts to promote bicycle safety. Athens-Clarke County is a bicycle friendly community in which citizens use bicycles for commuting, exercise, and leisurely purposes.

The latest data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration noted there were 726 cyclist deaths nationwide and 49,000 injuries due to motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2012. The same data shows that the average age of cyclists killed was 43. Alcohol involvement, either for the driver of the motor vehicle or the cyclist, was reported in more than 37 percent of all fatal cyclist crashes in 2012.

According to the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, deaths occurring to bicyclists in this state represent 2 percent of all crash fatalities in Georgia. The majority of these fatalities occurred between 3:00 PM and 9:00 PM. In Athens-Clarke County, data from the ACCPD shows that this year alone there has been one fatality and one serious injury crash involving a cyclist.

Bicyclists are considered vehicle operators and are required to obey all of the rules of the road including obeying traffic signs, signals, lane markings, and cyclists must ride in the same direction as traffic and not on the sidewalk. Sidewalk cycling is illegal for anyone over the age of 12 in Georgia. Cyclists should increase visibility by wearing bright clothing and, when riding at night, use a front light and a rear red reflector or flashing rear light.

Drivers of motor vehicles need to share the road with cyclists and allow at least 3 feet of clearance when passing and yield to cyclists at intersections. Drivers should be watchful for cyclists when making turns.

As part of increasing bicycle education, safety, and enforcement, ACCPD has partnered with BikeAthens. This partnership will allow officers to supply improperly equipped bicyclist with proper lighting and bicycle safety education materials. BikeAthens will supply bicycle lights to bicyclist identified by officers. The bicycle lights are free to the bicyclist and are funded through a grant from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety.

ACCPD wants you to arrive alive and enjoy the ride. For more information visit bikeathens.com and gahighwaysafety.org or contact Lt. Don Eckert at 706-208-1718 ext. 223.

###