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News Release

Arkansas City police investigate trio of car-bicycle accidents

Officers urge safety, awareness of bicyclists by passing motorists in response

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (May 16, 2016) — The Arkansas City Police Department is stressing bicycle safety and driver awareness in light of several recent collisions involving bicyclists and motor vehicles.

“These incidents highlight the need for both bicyclists and drivers to be aware of each other, and to offer each other plenty of space and respect while sharing the roadway,” said Police Chief Dan Ward.

The most recent incident occurred when the Ark City police and fire-EMS departments responded Saturday to an injury accident involving a car and a bicycle in the 400 block of South Summit Street.

An 8-year-old male was southbound on his bicycle when he crossed the path of a vehicle driven by a 35-year-old female that was exiting Town House Motel, 426 S. Summit St.

As the vehicle was crossing the sidewalk, the bicycle crossed its path. The juvenile was struck by the vehicle and sustained non-life-threatening injuries as a result of the collision.

The boy was evaluated by EMS at the scene, treated for his injuries and released.

In a prior incident May 5, officers responded to the 300 block of South First Street for a minor-injury accident involving a bicycle and a parked car. The victim, a 42-year-old male, was northbound and was in the process of being overtaken on the left by two vehicles.

He moved over to the right in accordance with state law, but hit a parked vehicle. EMS arrived at the scene and checked an injury to his forehead, but the man declined medical transport.

A third incident occurred May 4 when officers responded to the intersection of Kansas Avenue and Second Street for a minor-injury accident involving a car and a bicycle.

A 12-year-old female was crossing Kansas Avenue on her bicycle when she hit the rear passenger side of a car that was westbound on Kansas. She was treated at the scene by EMS for minor injuries.

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No citations were issued in connection with any of these three accidents.

Bicycle-related regulations

Every person riding a bicycle upon a roadway shall be granted all of the rights of a driver of a vehicle, according to Article 15, Section 128 of the Standard Traffic Ordinance adopted by the City.

However, Section 131 states that bicycle and moped operators are supposed to ride as far to the right side of the road as possible when traveling more slowly than the normal flow of vehicle traffic.

The exception to this rule is when they are:

- Overtaking and passing another bicycle or vehicle proceeding in the same direction;
- Preparing for a left turn at an intersection, or into a private road or driveway;
- Reasonably necessary to avoid conditions including, but not limited to, fixed or moving objects, parked or moving bicycles, pedestrians, animals, surface hazards or narrow-width lanes that make it unsafe to continue along the right-hand edge of the roadway.

Also, this section states that wherever a usable path for bicycles has been provided adjacent to a roadway, bicycle riders shall use that path and not the roadway.

Since that is not always possible, though, vehicles are instructed to give bicyclists a wide berth.

Article 8, Section 40 is the rule drivers must observe when passing any vehicle, especially a bicycle:

“The driver of a vehicle overtaking a bicycle proceeding in the same direction shall pass to the left thereof at a distance of not less than 3 feet and shall not again drive to the right side of the roadway until safely clear of the overtaken bicycle.

“The driver of a vehicle may pass a bicycle proceeding in the same direction in a no-passing zone, with the duty to execute the pass only when it is safe to do so.”

Bicycles are becoming an increasingly popular form of transportation, so police urge all motorists to be aware of their presence on Arkansas City roadways and take extra precautions to avoid collisions.

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