

August Transportation Safety Newsletter: Wildfire Season

Oregon Department of Transportation sent this bulletin at 08/01/2024 10:01 AM PDT

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Oregon Department
of Transportation

Transportation Safety

August 2024

Stay Safe During Wildfire Season



In recent years, we've seen an increase in wildfires and the smoke inevitably creates poor visibility on our roads, which is challenging for drivers. Sometimes the best thing to do is get off the road until conditions improve. Here are [tips for driving in smoky conditions](#).

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Legal to Pass Safely

When you're driving in Oregon it's now legal to pass people on bicycles in a no-passing zone, as long as they're riding at less than half the speed limit. First, be patient and hold back for a good moment to pass. Once it's clear, move fully into the next lane and pass at five miles below the speed limit. This avoids crowding riders, keeping them safe from the force of passing vehicles. Lastly, wait until you see the riders in your rearview mirror before you move back over. Share the road. So we can all get there safely.



[Watch Video](#)

Pedestrian Traffic Deaths Fall in 2023

For the first time since the pandemic, pedestrian traffic deaths have decreased. Drivers struck and killed 7,318 people in the United States in 2023 – down 5.4% from the year before but 14.1% above the pre-pandemic level in 2019 – according to a new report released by the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA). While this modest year-over-year decrease is welcome news, pedestrian fatalities have surged in recent years and reached a 40-year high in 2022.



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Stop on Red

Red light running is a significant cause of serious injury crashes in Oregon, specifically of debilitating brain injury and death crashes. Not only is it a state law (ORS 811.265), it's essential for everyone's safety that every driver in Oregon heed the warning to *Stop on Red*.



Rules of the Road – Stop Signs

At an intersection with a stop sign, steady red signal, or flashing red signal, you must stop before the marked stop line or crosswalk. Always yield to vulnerable road users, such as

pedestrians, and people riding bicycles, as well as traffic in the intersection when making an allowed turn. After stopping, if you are unable to see traffic coming from your left and right, slightly pull forward and scan the area. Even if you have a green light, do not enter an intersection unless there is room for your vehicle on the other side.



At intersections with stop signs in all four directions, it is common courtesy to allow the driver who stops first to go first. When in doubt, yield to the driver on your right. Never assume another driver will yield the right of way to you.

At intersections with two-way stop signs across from each other, the driver turning left should yield the right of way to approaching or oncoming traffic going straight.

Jefferson County Fair

You may have seen one of our safety staff in your community lately talking about safe driving, safety belts, child car seats, distracted driving, slowing your speeds, being safe in construction zones, or upcoming safety projects. Our crew in ODOT Region 4 was recently at the Jefferson County Fair providing information about the [US-97: High Bridge to Madras Safety Study](#) and providing safety outreach.



New Grants Awarded to Improve Student Safety

We're pleased to announce grants promoting Safe Routes to School. These grants make school routes safer and more accessible for students across the state through safety and access improvements and education.

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