



Oregon Department of Transportation

NEWS RELEASE

Region 1 *Columbia, Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas and Hood River Counties*

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Plan Ahead and Drive Safely Over Labor Day Weekend

Oregon Department of Transportation officials today cautioned motorists to pay special attention to safety during this Labor Day weekend – the final days of a busy summer travel season on Oregon’s highways.

“We want everyone to arrive safely at their destinations,” said Jason Tell, ODOT Region 1 Manager. “So buckle up and be prepared!”

Tell said holiday travelers should drive defensively and make sure everyone in the vehicle uses a safety belt. Drivers also should take advantage of Oregon’s approximately six dozen Safety Rest Areas to stay rested and alert.

Roadwork Suspended Over Labor Day Weekend

The department has suspended construction activities on all state highways for the long holiday.

“We’ll do everything we can to help travelers safely get to where they’re going, with minimal disruption,” said Tell. “All ODOT-controlled construction activity that affects travel lanes on our highways shuts down from Friday at noon through Labor Day.”

However, Tell warned that motorists still must pay attention to the orange construction signs, detours, lane restrictions and speed limit signs in work zones.

COMET Vehicles Will Patrol During Holiday Weekend

ODOT’s Portland-area incident response program, COMET, will maintain its service to motorists during the long holiday weekend. The main goals of the program are to keep Portland’s freeways clear from incidents and minimize disruptions to traffic flow.

For updated information on highway work and current travel information throughout Oregon, visit www.tripcheck.com, or call the Oregon road report at 511 or (800) 977-6368
Visit the ODOT News Media Center at www.odot.state.or.us

COMET trucks focus on three areas of traffic management: incident prevention such as clearing disabled vehicles, road hazards and debris; motorist assistance such as flat tire repair, battery jump or providing a gallon of gas; and on-scene incident management to provide safe, efficient traffic flow around an accident.

If you do break down in the Portland metro area, stay in your disabled vehicle, if possible. If you do leave the area, turn on your emergency flashers and leave a note explaining that your car is temporarily disabled. For safety reasons, ODOT immediately removes vehicles abandoned in travel lanes.

School is back in session

Much to the chagrin of children throughout Oregon, the Labor Day holiday also means the return of school. As they travel along area roads this fall, drivers may notice differences in school zones this fall. Some signs have changed under House Bill 2840 from the 2005 Legislature. Oregon law now requires drivers to slow to 20 mph in school zones when yellow lights are flashing, during the hours that signs indicate or, if no specific hours are posted, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on days when school is in session.

“If a school zone has neither flashing lights nor posted hours for the 20 mph speed, drivers need only remember to slow down in those zones from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on school days,” said Julie Yip, Safe Routes to School Coordinator for ODOT’s Safety Division. “And if there’s a crossing guard on duty, that’s a clear sign to slow to 20 mph in that zone, and to stop when the guard raises the crossing flag for children to cross the street.”

“Driving just 5 mph over the 20 mph speed limit increases the risk of hitting a child and increases the severity of the injury when a child is struck by a vehicle,” Yip said.

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