



OREGON THREE FLAGS CAMPAIGN BLITZ FACT SHEET & TALKING POINTS

February 8 – 21, 2010

Lack of belt use was a major factor in half of all Oregon motor vehicle occupant deaths last year. One in three (32%) children under age eight killed or injured in crashes were using adult belts systems (223 children) or were totally unrestrained (22 children) rather than riding in child seats appropriate for their size. Speeding and driver impairment were the other most common causes of injury crashes.

- Oregon's Three Flags Campaign is committed to reducing traffic crash injuries and deaths by promoting safety belt use and discouraging speeding and impaired drivers.
- The campaign is a federally funded enforcement program administered by ODOT through the Oregon State Sheriffs Association, Oregon Association Chiefs of Police and OSP Patrol Division.
- Twenty nine Sheriff Offices, 67 Police Departments and OSP Patrol Division are participating in federal overtime grants this year. The grants will be used primarily during joint, statewide enforcement saturations or "blitzes" scheduled for February, May and September.
- The February enforcement blitz runs February 9 through 22nd and will focus on educating the public regarding booster seats and recent changes to Oregon child restraint and safety belt laws.
- Consistent safety belt use is the single most effective way to protect people and reduce fatalities in motor vehicle crashes, according to the US Department of Transportation.
- "Proper use" is required by Oregon law and means using the entire belt system, lap belt low across hips, and shoulder belt over collarbone and crossing center of chest. Belts should be free of slack and lying flat with no twists or knots. If the shoulder belt portion of an adult safety belt rides up onto the neck or feels uncomfortable, comfort may be increased by sliding the built-in adjuster up or down or by moving seat position. Shoulder belt should NOT be placed under the arm or behind the back – this can cause serious internal injuries or ejection in a crash. Vehicle

- Probably the greatest dangers to unbelted or improperly belted occupants are the significant likelihood and consequences of ejection. Unbelted or improperly belted occupants are five times more likely to be ejected in a crash than one who is belted. Odds of surviving ejection from a motor vehicle are estimated at one in four. This is why Oregon law also prohibits minors from riding in an open bed of a pickup truck, where no restraints are available to hold the occupants inside the vehicle.
- **CHANGES TO CHILD RESTRAINT LAW Effective July 1, 2007:** A child weighing less than 40 pounds must be restrained in a child safety seat. A child under one year of age or weighing less than twenty pounds must be restrained in a child seat, rear-facing. A child over forty pounds but under age eight or less than 4' 9" tall must be restrained in a booster seat that elevates them so the lap/shoulder belts fit correctly. For help with child safety seats, refer to the seat manufacturer's instructions, vehicle owner's manual or call ACTS Oregon Child Safety Seat Resource Center at 1-800-772-1315.
- While it is not the law in Oregon, it is strongly recommended that children aged twelve and under ride in rear seating positions. Research indicates that such rear seating reduces the risk of injury by 37% for that age group.
- **REMOVAL OF COMMERCIAL VEHICLE EXEMPTION Effective January 1, 2008:** Effective January 1, 2008 Oregon's safety belt law no longer exempts commercial vehicles which are "designed or used to transport property." This broad definition includes all types of trucks, vans, and passenger cars including those that are used for bulk transport, specialized delivery services, or movement of materials in conjunction with various projects or activities.
- Oregon's safety belt enforcement and child passenger safety education programs have reaped impressive success. Since the 1990 passage of an adult belt law, observed belt use among the motoring public has doubled from 50% to 96% while crash fatality and injury rates have both decreased by 43%. Oregon's 2009 belt use rate was 96.3% and ranks within the top five state rates nationally. Hawaii's belt rate is the highest reported at 97.9% yet the average reported by states nationwide is only 82%.