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Transportation Safety Newsletter, October 2020

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Oregon Department
of Transportation

Transportation Safety

October 2020

Wildfires Have a Major Effect on Our Transportation System



The Oregon wildfires affect so much of our lives including our transportation system. Most people know that roads close due to flames and smoke when fires are in the immediate area, but many people may not know that debris such as downed trees can cause closures. Fire can damage the road surface, signs, guardrails, etc., too. There are four phases of re-opening highways - evaluation, critical services, partial opening, and full restoration.

Burnt trees in the hundreds of thousands are threatening crews working to open roads and repair utilities across the state. With changing weather and rain, the risk of landslides and flooding is a growing concern. Fire damaged vegetation that once helped hold soil, rocks, trees, and other debris to hillsides is gone in some areas and rain will likely result in some landslides. ODOT is working closely with the forest service, law enforcement, county officials, and other agencies to keep travelers safe and get state routes reopened as soon as possible.

A new [webpage](#) will track this progress showing information on what we've done and still need to do to reopen closed roads. The webpage also provides information on road and office closures, links to news releases, photos, videos, and more.

Know before you go. Partial openings that allow limited traffic while work continues will be common. Drivers can expect to see flaggers or pilot cars and should plan for frequent lane closures. Check www.TripCheck.com for updates on closures.

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Deer and Elk Migration Season

October and November are the busiest months for vehicle-wildlife collisions in Oregon. With deer and elk on the move due to breeding season and migration to winter ranges, more wildlife are crossing roads all over the state. Be alert and ready to slow down.

Signs placed in particularly popular areas for wildlife crossing are one tool to help drivers avoid collisions. Being especially watchful around sunrise and sunset is another tip that can help reduce vehicle-wildlife incidents.

Be aware of the possible dangers associated with animals on or near roadways. When you see a wildlife, reduce your speed, and try to stay in your lane. And always wear your safety



October is Distracted Driving Month

Distracted driving is an extremely dangerous behavior for drivers, passengers, and non-occupants alike. Distraction is a specific type of inattention that occurs when drivers divert their attention from the driving task to focus on some other activity instead.

In Oregon over the past five years, 137 people lost their lives in crashes involving a distracted driver, and more than 20,992 were injured.

Handling your phone while driving is unsafe and against the law. A distracted driving violation can cost you up to \$2,500. There's no text or notification worth risking a life. Focus on your primary task of driving.

belt!

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More Tips



October is Pedestrian Safety Month

Whether it be in a parking lot, crosswalk, or on a road, everyone is a pedestrian. In the U.S., a traffic-related pedestrian death occurs every 84 minutes. In a crash between a vehicle and a pedestrian, the pedestrian is far more likely to be killed or injured. Protect yourself and your loved ones when walking, and learn how you can help us prevent pedestrian injuries and deaths. Driving at the posted speed limit provides

the driver time to “see, identify, and react” in time to brake for pedestrians – slow especially at night. And as days become darker, motorists and pedestrians must be more alert. Pedestrians can carry a flashlight and attach reflective materials to their clothing – these materials reflect light from headlights back to drivers, making it easier to see you.

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National Teen Driver Safety Week

During National Teen Driver Safety Week on October 18-24 – and every week – parents should have conversations with their teens about the important rules they need to follow to stay safe behind the wheel of a motor vehicle. These rules address the greatest dangers for teen drivers: 1) distracted driving (texting while driving), 2) impaired driving (alcohol and drugs), 3) inconsistent or no seat belt use, 4) number of passengers, and

5) speeding. Even if you think they aren't listening, they are. So, remember, set the rules before they hit the road.

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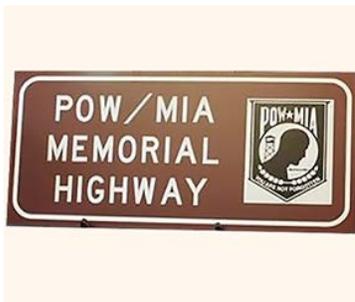


Input Requested for Transportation Safety Action Plan

The TSAP unifies transportation safety planning in Oregon. It provides long-term goals, policies, and strategies, as well as near-term actions to eliminate transportation system deaths and life-changing injuries. Help ODOT update the TSAP to meet your transportation safety needs by participating in an [online survey](#) available now through November 20. Visit the

TSAP [project website](#) for resources on the past and future of the TSAP and sign up for the project [e-newsletter](#) to stay informed. Email questions and comments to: safety@odot.state.or.us.

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Dedication of Oregon POW/MIA Memorial Highway

On September 18, 10 large POW/MIA Memorial Highway signs were dedicated in six cities located across Oregon on U.S. Highway 26 between Seaside and Vale. The purpose of the POW/MIA Memorial Highway is to honor Oregon's nearly 1,000 Prisoners of War (POWs) and 1,000 Oregonians who still remain Missing in Action (MIA) or "Unaccounted-For" from World War I to the Vietnam War. The memorial is also designed to educate the traveling public and let the families of POWs and MIAs know Oregon supports their hopes and prayers for the return of their loved one's remains.

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