

Transportation Safety Newsletter, August 2021

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Oregon Department
of Transportation

Transportation Safety

August 2021

Traffic Deaths Reach Record High



According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 38,680 people were killed on U.S. roadways in 2020 – the highest number since 2007 and an increase of 7.2% from the year before. In Oregon, 508 people were killed in traffic crashes in 2020 – a 17-year high we have not seen since 2003. *Traffic deaths surged even though there was a decline in driving during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Oregon has seen more deaths on our roadways caused by risky and dangerous driving like speeding, impaired driving, being distracted, and not wearing a seat belt. For those of us who work to reduce traffic crashes, this sudden spike in traffic deaths is raising a lot of red flags and we fear we are losing ground on the progress we've made in the last decade.

It's simple: a crash is caused by the decisions you make. Slow down, buckle up, stow your

phone, and never drive impaired. If you choose to drive impaired, speeding, or distracted, you're risking it all. And that's no accident.



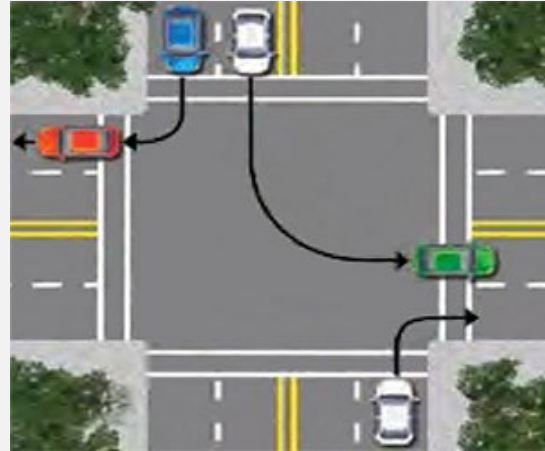
Share the Road during Harvest

Summer harvest is in full swing which means that farmers often drive their equipment – such as tractors, swathers, combines, and trucks – out on public roads to move between fields. Driving a slow-moving tractor on a highway is legal and often a necessary part of harvest, but it can pose a safety risk without caution, courtesy, and patience.

To help keep both motorists and farmers safe, the Oregon Farm Bureau Health & Safety Committee offers a [free brochure](#) with important tips on how to share the road safely with farm equipment.

It can be surprising just how slow 25 mph is on the highway. A tractor that looks far on the horizon can be directly in front of a fast-moving car within seconds. So slow down, be patient, and use caution when encountering a tractor on the road.

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Rules of the Road: Turning

Turn signals are used to communicate with other drivers where you intend to go. **You must signal before you turn, change lanes, exit a roundabout or pull away from a curb.** Before making such a move, be sure you can do so safely. Check traffic ahead, behind, and to the side.

If your vehicle is moving in traffic, use your turn signal at least 100 feet before the turn or lane change. When you are parked at a curb and about to reenter traffic, use a signal long enough to alert traffic that you are moving into the lane.

The general rule for turning is to turn from the nearest lane in the direction you are traveling **to the nearest lane** in the direction you want to go. Avoid swinging wide or changing lanes while turning.

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Safe Walking and Biking News

ODOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program recently shared their [latest newsletter](#). Featured is the Oregon Coast Bike Route safety message, updated Bicycle Manual, funding for pedestrian and bicycle projects, and more!

We also want your input to help us update our Safe Biking for Kids [Activity Book](#), [Activity Sheet](#), and [Bicycle Safety Guide](#).



Whether you use the guide as part of your curriculum, keep them up in a bookshelf in your lobby, or you've never used them before, we want to hear how you think we can best help kids learn how to walk and roll safely. The survey is anonymous and should take 2-5 minutes. **We ask that you complete it by August 10, 2021.** [Take the survey.](#)

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Guidebook for Pedestrians and Drivers

ODOT is pleased to announce the new pedestrian guidebook "[Oregonians Stand Out – A Guidebook for Pedestrians and Drivers](#)" is now available online in City of Portland's ten safe harbor languages (English and Spanish guidebooks are available for free in print):

- Spanish
- Vietnamese
- Simplified Chinese
- Traditional Chinese
- Russian
- Somali
- Ukrainian
- Romanian
- Nepali
- Chuukese

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Traffic Congestion Safety

Our partners at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office shared driver safety tips to assist emergency responders, stay safe, and help keep delays minimal when there is traffic congestion:

- When stopped in traffic, make sure your vehicle isn't blocking any intersecting roads or driveways.
- Make sure your headlights are on and leave your foot on the

brake, even in the daytime. Drivers behind you may not realize that traffic is stopped ahead. The more visible you are the better.

- Stay in your vehicle. Even though traffic is stopped, exiting your vehicle on the roadway is hazardous; traffic may begin moving suddenly or emergency responders could be approaching the scene.
- Stay focused when passing the cause of the congestion. Additional incidents sometimes happen due to drivers paying too much attention to crashes and paying too little attention to the

road.

- Use extreme caution when turning around or changing lanes. You could end up blocking traffic yourself. Emergency personnel may use the oncoming lane to get to the scene.
- Find a place to wait it out. Chances are, there is a park, natural area, or business nearby. It may not be a planned excursion, but it's probably better than waiting in your car.
- Be courteous! Being stuck in traffic is frustrating for everyone involved.



Keeping Kids Safe and a Community Connected

People in Powers, a town of about 1,000 in the coast range 20 miles south of Myrtle Point, are excited about a [Safe Routes to School grant](#) and the difference it's going to make in their community. They are thrilled their children will have a sidewalk to get them safely to and from school.

[Read More](#)

Resources

[Contact us at ODOT Safety Division](#)

[Order free safety brochures, posters, and more](#)

[Oregon crash data](#)

[National traffic safety information](#)

[Transportation safety newsletter archives](#)



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