



February 3, 2014

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Officers from the Coos Bay Police Department will join law enforcement agencies throughout Oregon in a Safety Belt Enforcement Campaign from February 10<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>. This is the first of three scheduled safety belt

and traffic safety campaigns for 2014. Oregon sheriff's offices, local police departments, and OSP will participate on federal overtime grants from US Department of Transportation.

The focus of the program is to increase public awareness of the seatbelt laws with the goal of reducing traffic injuries and deaths.

As officers from the Coos Bay Police Department take to the road during this campaign, they will focus their attention on seatbelt violations, child safety seat violations, and texting/distracted drivers. Officers will also be watching for drivers who are speeding and driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Oregon law requires that there be "proper use" of the entire seatbelt system - lap belt placed low across the hips and a shoulder belt over the collarbone and crossing the center of the chest. Belts should be free of slack and lying flat with no twists or knots. If necessary, slide the attachment on the door post up or down to fit the size of you or your passenger. Shoulder belts should not be placed under the arm or behind the back as this can cause serious internal injuries or ejection in the event of a crash.

- A statewide observation survey in June 2013 found 98 percent of Oregon's motoring public are using safety belts making Oregon one of the two highest belt use states in our country. Since the 1990 passage of Oregon's adult belt law, the observed belt use among the motoring public has doubled from 50% to 98% while crash fatality and injury rates have both dramatically decreased by 58% and 24% respectively.
- Consistent vehicle restraint use is the single most effective way to protect motor vehicle occupants from crash injury or death according to the US Department of Transportation.
- Speeding and driver impairment are the most common causes of injury crashes. Oregon's safety belt overtime enforcement program is committed to

reducing the severity of crash injuries by promoting proper safety belt and child restraint use.

- Child safety seats reduce crash fatality risk for infants under 1 year old by 71 percent and for toddlers aged 1 to 4 by 54 percent. Safety belts reduce fatality risk by 45 to 60 percent. And yet, 31% or 61 of Oregon's 198 occupant fatalities in 2012 were reportedly unrestrained. ODOT estimates that approximately half of these fatalities could have been avoided with proper restraint use.
- OREGON LAW: A child weighing less than 40 pounds must be properly restrained in a child safety seat. A child under one year of age or weighing less than twenty pounds must be restrained in a rear-facing child seat. A child over forty pounds but under age eight or less than 4' 9" tall must be restrained in either a child seat with harness system or in a booster seat that raises the child up so that a lap and shoulder belt system fit correctly.
- For help with child seats, refer to the seat manufacturer's instructions, vehicle owner's manual, or your local child seat fitting station. A list of fitting stations can be found at: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/apps/cps/index.htm> or at <http://oregonimpact.org/car-seat-resources/>
- "BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS of the American Academy of Pediatrics and USDOT: Children should ride in rear-facing car seats to age two or to the upper weight limit of the seat in use. Children should continue to ride in safety seats to forty pounds or the maximum upper weight limit of their forward facing seat before transitioning to a booster seat. Children under age thirteen should ride in the back seat. National statistics suggest rear seating reduces injury risk by 37% among that age group.
- The greatest danger to unbelted children and adult occupants is ejection from the vehicle. Unbelted or improperly restrained occupants are five times more likely to be ejected than one who is belted. They can also slam into other passengers and injure them during a crash or sharp swerve. Odds of surviving ejection are estimated at one in four. (Compare this to a one in two hundred fatality rate for occupants who remain inside the vehicle.) Ejection is the principal reason that minors are prohibited from riding in an open bed of a pickup truck.

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