



PRESS RELEASE

UPDATE – Three Flags Seatbelt Blitz Continues

The Three Flags Blitz continues. Deputies have issued over 75 seat belt citations, over 100 Mobile Communication Device citations, and noted numerous speeding violations. The Blitz continues through Sunday, February 23rd. The final results of the blitz will be released next week.

Three Flags Seatbelt Blitz Kicks Off Next Week

February 8, 2014— Deputies with the Washington County Sheriff's Office will be conducting the Three Flags Seatbelt Blitz over the next two weeks. Beginning Monday February 10, 2014, law enforcement agencies from Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia will participate in a two-week campaign to encourage the use of hands free cell phone devices, seat belts and child safety restraints. The "Blitz" runs from February 10, 2014 through February 23, 2014.

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA)

- In 2012, an estimated 421,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver. This was a nine percent increase from the estimated 387,000 people injured in 2011.
- Seat belts are the most effective safety feature ever invented and have helped save thousands of lives. Sadly, one in five Americans fail to regularly wear a seat belt when driving or riding in a motor vehicle.
- 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. Yet, 31 percent 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. According to the US Department of Transportation, consistent vehicle restraint use is the single most effective way to protect motor vehicle occupants from crash injury or death.

- For safety belt systems, "proper use" means lap belt placed low across hips and shoulder belt crossing center of the chest over the collarbone. Belts should be free of slack and lying flat with no twists or knots. The shoulder belt should NOT be placed under the arm or behind the back – this can cause serious internal injuries or ejection in a crash.

- 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.
- There are several types of distracted driving habits, but because text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most alarming distraction.

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 20 pounds must be restrained in a rear-facing child seat. A child over 40 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.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office [Traffic Safety Unit](#) is dedicated to promoting and improving traffic safety through education, analysis and education.