



*****For Immediate Release*****

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‘Home for the Holidays’ traffic safety campaign begins

OLYMPIA, Wash. – The Washington State Patrol (WSP), in partnership with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) and law enforcement agencies across the state, will begin the ‘Home for the Holidays’ traffic safety campaign this weekend.

The educational campaign continues through New Year’s Eve with a focus on reminding and encouraging drivers to take extra precautions in adverse weather conditions such as snow, rain, ice, and fog. The fall and winter months also bring less daylight, making it important for drivers to maintain awareness for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and bicyclists.

The WSP historically observes an increase in collisions of all types during this time frame, as well as an increase of impaired drivers during the fall and winter months.

Encouraging drivers to make good choices behind the wheel is especially important considering the rise in fatality collisions over the past several years. According to preliminary WTSC data, there have been nearly as many fatal collisions through September 2023 (578) as compared to the same timeframe in 2022 (582). Last year was a 32-year high for fatality collisions across Washington state.

“Fatality collisions are preventable tragedies, and we must all do our part in order to help save lives,” said WSP Chief John R. Batiste. “Buckling up, slowing down, and driving sober can help make sure we all make it home to our loved ones for the holidays.”

According to the WTSC data, 776 lives were lost across the state due to traffic related collisions in the months of October, November, and December from 2018 to 2022. Of those tragedies, 40 percent involved impaired drivers, 30 percent involved excessive speed, 16 percent involved distracted drivers, and 29 percent of those killed were pedestrians or pedal cyclists.

Proactive choices made by all roadway users can lead to a safer trip, including:

- Choosing to buckle up and ensuring all occupants are also properly seat belted before driving;
- Following posted speed limits and slowing as necessary in adverse weather and around vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and cyclists;

- Increasing following distance, especially in adverse weather or low light conditions;
- Choosing to always drive sober;
- Avoiding distractions, such as the use of a hand-held cell phone or watching videos while driving;

“While we can’t prevent all collisions, buckling up and slowing down, particularly in wet conditions, dramatically improve the chances that drivers and their passengers will survive a crash and avoid serious injury,” said Shelly Baldwin, WTSC Director.

Before hitting the road this holiday season, drivers are also asked to check the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) websites for road conditions, especially when traveling over mountain passes. Drivers should also ensure their vehicles are roadworthy, including:

- Checking windshield wipers and wiper fluid;
- Ensuring tires have the proper PSI and tread depth;
- Ensuring all lights are in good working order;
- Checking emergency kits to ensure everything is up to date and readily available;

For more information about the Home for the Holidays campaign, as well as tips for fall and winter driving, please visit <https://wsp.wa.gov/home-for-the-holidays>.

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