



For Immediate Release

Tuesday, Aug. 14, 2007

Joint Press Release: Washington State Patrol
Port Orchard Police Department

Kitsap County Sheriff's Office
Bremerton Police Department

Aggressive driving / Road rage

Dangerous roadways summer '07, part 2

The Scenario

It's an everyday thing and it has become a frequent part of the daily psyche of driving in Western Washington and Kitsap County.

Aggressive driving. Road rage. We all see it occur and we shake our heads. Why isn't there a cop around when this goes down? Don't these people understand how they're putting other lives at risk as well as their own? Why is it that these drivers are so self-obsessed or reckless in their driving?

The answers are as many and varied as there are drivers on the road, but it most often comes down to these:

- Society is moving at a faster pace now than in the past. Many people are always in a hurry and don't necessarily feel like they have the time to slow down. This may be due to the self-imposed desire to maintain a competitive edge over their perceived competition, or because of competing demands on daily schedules.
- Then there are those who drive aggressively just because they want to. Their attitude is that motor vehicle laws really don't apply to them. They've got a vehicle, their anger is seething for whatever reason, actual or perceived, and the roadway is their form of stress relief. Everyone else... get out of the way!
- The folly of youth. This by no means applies to all juveniles, but it does to some. And it certainly has its share of adults (age 18+) who haven't quite grasped the definition of maturity and reasonable action. It's the power of the rocket motorcycle, or the imported sports car, combined with roadway antics studied in action movies or video games.

We hear and see them, frequently, as they accelerate down a stretch of road trying to top out their speed before the next corner. Often another like minded driver is en trace as they practice their own form of Grand Prix racing on state and county roads.

- Impaired drivers. Whether it's the ingestion of alcoholic intoxicants, illegal narcotics or prescription / over-the-counter medications, they all have an effect on the ability of drivers to operate a motor vehicle safely. First to decline is good judgment followed closely by a drastic reduction in driving skills. It's called driving under the influence (DUI). When you couple DUI with any of the above aspects it is a recipe for disaster.

With summer in full swing and the month of August leading the year with the greatest number of traffic fatalities than any other month, local law enforcement agencies want to remind drivers about roadway safety in Kitsap County. The Washington State Patrol, Bremerton and Port Orchard Police Departments along with the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office have chosen August to increase patrols and safety awareness throughout the county.

With a goal of zero fatalities during the month, law enforcement this week focuses on aggressive driving and road rage.

Definitions

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the definitions of aggressive driving and road rage are:

Aggressive driving: "The commission of two or more moving violations that is likely to endanger other persons or property, or any single intentional violation that requires a defensive reaction of another driver."

Road rage: "An assault with a motor vehicle or other dangerous weapon by the operator or passenger(s) of one motor vehicle on the operator or passenger(s) of another motor vehicle caused by an incident on a roadway."

Symptoms

- Mentally condemning or the thought of violence toward other drivers.
- Verbally expressing condemnation of other drivers to passengers in your vehicle.
- Not obeying traffic safety rules, because you don't agree with them.
- Engaging in aggressive and risky driving:
 - Following too close
 - Speeding
 - Weaving in & out of traffic
 - Speeding up to beat a traffic signal

Cutting between vehicles to change lanes
Using horn excessively
Flashing headlamps
Braking to get others to back off of your rear bumper
Passing traffic and then slowing down “to teach other drivers a lesson”

Reporting an Aggressive Driver

If you have witnessed or been a victim of an aggressive driving act you can call **9-1-1** and provide the following information that is required by law enforcement:

- Location where you last observed the vehicle.
- Direction of travel.
- Name or route number of the road / highway.
- Color(s) of vehicles involved and, if possible, the make / model and license plate numbers.
- Were weapons involved?
- What happened?
- Are you a victim or witness?

Law Enforcement Actions

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) began its aggressive driving program on Memorial Day weekend, 1998. The Aggressive Driving Apprehension Team (ADAT) is a proactive effort to locate and arrest those drivers who drive aggressively. Apprehending aggressive drivers is one of the four WSP core missions: (1) reduce DUIs; (2) reduce incidents of aggressive driving; (3) reduce incidents of dangerous speeding, and (4) increase seat belt compliance.

The WSP ADAT program utilizes unmarked or unconventional police vehicles. Some of these vehicles are located within Kitsap County.

The Bremerton and Port Orchard Police Departments employ other methods as they seek to reduce incidents of aggressive driving / road rage. These include special emphasis patrols dedicated to traffic safety / enforcement, motorcycle officers, unmarked traffic units and neighborhood speed monitoring devices.

The Kitsap County Sheriff's Office has formed its own, dedicated ADAT program within the sheriff's office traffic unit, modeled closely on the program established by WSP. The sheriff's ADAT program has acquired unmarked / non-standard vehicles equipped for law enforcement use, in addition to motorcycle officers and black & white marked patrol vehicles. Along with the four tenants of the WSP core mission, the sheriff's office traffic unit also conducts school zone speed enforcement emphasis patrols during the academic year as one of its core missions.



The Kitsap County Sheriff's Office's Aggressive Driving Apprehension Team with conventional marked patrol vehicles and motorcycles, along with unconventional, police equipped vehicles.

Although not part of the ADAT program, the sheriff's office recently established a new initiative, the Community Speed Monitoring (COSMO) program, this past June. For further information, go to:

<http://www.kitsapgov.com/sheriff/mediareleases/2007mediareleases.asp>

and then click on 06-18 COSMO program.

Safety Tips

- Be courteous, even if the other driver is not. Avoid conflict if possible. If another driver challenges you, take a deep breath and move out of the way. Never underestimate the other driver's capacity for violence.
- When entering traffic or changing lanes, make sure that you have enough room.
- Make sure that you have established a safe following distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you.

- Don't make aggressive hand gestures to other drivers when they offend you with their driving.
- Signal when turning or changing lanes.
- Control your anger; remember it takes two to start a fight.
- Avoid prolonged eye contact with the angry / offending driver.
- Get help! Call **9-1-1** on your cell phone or go to a public place and use a pay phone. Don't pull over to the side of the road.
- Forget about winning! No one wins in a crash or collision.

Drive Safe Drive Sober
Wear Seat Belts Slow Down

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