



Al Williams, General Manager at the Portland Observer, anticipates the new seatbelt laws. Photo by Richard J. Brown

Oregon's New Safety Belt Law

During the rush to close the 1987 legislative session, a safety belt use law finally emerged. There has been some confusion about the contents of the law and what relationship it has to the 65 MPH speed limit on rural interstate freeways. Here are some answers to those questions:

Belts and 65 MPH:

- The safety belt use law and the 65 MPH speed limit on rural interstate freeways are separate pieces of legislation.
- Both laws go into effect on September 27th of this year.
- The safety belt use law will be on the ballot on November 8, 1988. At that time the people of Oregon will decide whether or not to keep the law.
- The 65 MPH speed limit will not be voted upon.

The Safety Belt Law:

The safety belt use law contains two offenses. Both are traffic infractions with a maximum fine of \$50. This is the lowest fine for a traffic offense, just like driving with a taillight out. The first offense is called "failure to use safety belts". The other offense is called "failure to maintain safety belts in working order".

Who Must Wear Safety Belts?

- All drivers and passengers, all ages, resident and non-resident.
- Children under one year of age must ride secured in an approved child safety system (infant/child car safety seat).

Expections:

- If there are more persons than safety belts.
- If the person has obtained a "certificate of exemption" from the DMV (requires a physicians statement to DMV that the safety belt system

would be impractical or harmful to the person because of physical condition, medical problem, or body size).

- If the person is in the custody of a law enforcement agency
- If the person is delivering newspapers or mail in the regular course of their work.
- If the person is riding in an ambulance giving aid and the safety belt system would substantially inhibit the administration of medical aid.

What Vehicles:

- All motor vehicles under 8000 pounds (including pickup trucks).

Exceptions:

- Commercial vehicles (defined in ORS 801.210)
- Any vehicle manufactured without safety belts. Safety belts need not be installed in these vehicles. However, if safety belts have been removed from a vehicle that had them when it was new, then the safety belts must be replaced. (Motorcycles do not have safety belts.)

About Safety Belts:

- The law states that safety belts must be worn PROPERLY. This means that if a vehicle has a lap and shoulder combination, both belts must be worn as intended, not one or the other.
- The law also states that an owner must keep belts in working order.

Who is Responsible:

- Drivers are responsible for themselves and passengers under 16 years of age.
- Passengers 16 years and over are responsible for themselves.
- Owners are responsible to keep safety belts in working order.

Portland is Site of Ninth Annual Conference

Rape — still one of the most underreported crimes in the U.S. — an other problems of sexual assault will be the focus of examination when more than 700 people gather July 22-25 at the Portland Hilton for the Ninth Annual Conference of the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCASA).

The Oregon event will feature more than 70 workshops, institutes, and other events addressing the theme "Confronting the Violence: Our Work, Our Struggle, Our Vision, Our Future," according to NCASA President Fern Y. Ferguson.

The Ninth Annual NCASA Conference opens on Wednesday, July 22, with the "Women of Color Institute," a day-long forum featuring panels, discussions, and social events designed for women of particular ethnic identities to address cultural concerns associated with rape. The Women of Color Caucus from the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence is helping coordinate this institute.

Other highlights of the four-day conference include a healing institute for victims/survivors, a speak-out on sexual assault, a Take Back the Night March (in cooperation with the Portland committee of the same name), the President's keynote, and a long list of workshops covering topics related to sexual abuse.

The National Coalition Against Sexual Assault was formed in 1979

to promote the rights of sexual assault victims and to encourage better services for victims in local communities. In addition to sponsoring an annual conference, NCASA testifies before congressional committees, provides technical assistance to groups and agencies on request, and works to raise the public awareness around rape, incest, molestation, sexual harassment and similar crimes. NCASA membership is open to any individual or group that wishes to support NCASA activities.

The Ninth Annual NCASA Conference, to be held in Portland July 22-25, is open to the public. For registration information, write NCASA '87, P.O. Box 42311, Portland, OR 97242-0311.

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