



WASHINGTON
Traffic Safety
COMMISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2008

Contacts:

MJ Haught, WTSC Communications Manager, 360.586.0297, mjhaught@wtsc.wa.gov
Elaine Kraft, PRR Media Consultant, 206.623.0232 x 249, ekraft@prrbiz.com

X-52 Means Extra Patrols Every Week to Target Speeding, Impaired Motorists On Washington Roads

Speeding, impaired drivers will be caught, officers statewide say

Olympia, WA – Washington law enforcement agencies today announced a coordinated launch of ongoing, high visibility patrol efforts to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries. The statewide strategy, X-52, is aimed at saving lives with *Extra Patrols Every Week*.

“Our goal is to have zero traffic fatalities on our roads, and X-52 will help get us there,” said Lowell Porter, Director of the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC). The WTSC, in conjunction with the Washington State Patrol (WSP) and the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, is launching X-52 to reduce crashes caused by impaired or speeding drivers.

X-52 means extra patrols will be happening every week in Washington with enhanced approaches and tools.

- Law enforcement agencies will work together at specific locations where impaired driving and speeding are prevalent. This cohesive approach was successfully used in a pilot project enforcing speeding laws in Pierce and Snohomish Counties in 2007.
- The Washington State Department of Transportation has developed maps using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology and electronic collision data. GIS technology provides the capability to analyze and map collision clusters on roadways by specific factors such as impaired driving. These maps and local knowledge will help identify locations for potential emphasis patrols. (See the attached statewide map.)
- Local public education will be strong throughout the state, conducted by Traffic Safety and DUI Task Force Coordinators (see the attached roster) and WSP’s Public Information Officers. Their message will be simple: If you choose to drive impaired or speed, these patrols are designed to catch you.

WSP Chief John Batiste said, “Drunk drivers don’t just kill on holidays. They destroy families every single week of the year. Washington drivers should all know that if they get behind the wheel after drinking, or are driving too fast, extra patrols will be looking for them every week, not just during holiday peaks.”

WSP’s extra patrols are funded through a grant from the WTSC, as are local law enforcement’s patrols. Sheriffs’ offices, police departments and Tribal Nations are receiving \$450,000 in extra federal funding for X-52 enforcement.

Don Pierce, Executive Director of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, said, “X-52 is an unprecedented statewide, coordinated effort. Local law enforcement agencies across the state want to work together and with Washington State Patrol to reduce roadway deaths.”

Research in the U.S. and other countries shows that increasing patrols, and publicizing these extra patrols, can reduce alcohol-involved crashes. In the past, WTSC grants have provided funding for extra enforcement and education efforts in short bursts, usually centered on holidays. The effectiveness of this strategy worked well in the early years, but the effectiveness has been diminishing, particularly for impaired driving.

Porter added that X-52 is just one additional strategy being used to reduce fatal crashes as part of Target Zero, Washington’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan with a goal of zero deaths and zero disabling injuries by 2030.

For additional information about the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, visit www.wtsc.wa.gov

####

Advisory: Media outlets soon will be receiving news releases with county and Tribal Nation local information from nearby Task Force Coordinators.

Attachments: Task Force Coordinator roster by county/Tribal Nation
 Statewide GIS density map (local maps available)