

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

The **Three Flags Campaign** is an international special traffic enforcement program (STEP) and involves hundreds of law enforcement agencies in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. **Since October 1993, the Campaign has sought to reduce the number of motor vehicle-related deaths and injuries by increasing public awareness of laws regarding safety belt use and other traffic issues including DUII and speed.** While these goals are pursued year-round by many agencies, the Campaign provides federal overtime funding which allows police officers statewide to join together for two-week periods of intensive, high-visibility enforcement. Prior to each of three annual "blitzes", participating agencies attend a preparatory workshop conducted by ODOT's Transportation Safety Division and certified by the Department of Public Safety Standards & Training. In addition to pre-blitz preparatory workshops, participating officers are encouraged to acquire specialized training in correct use of safety belts and child safety seats, and to nurture community awareness of traffic safety.

Officers conduct local belt use surveys and public education activities during the weeks just prior to and following each blitz. Campaign performance is measured by local belt use rates, enforcement contacts and public information activities reported by each agency.

The **Campaign** was initiated in 1993 along Interstate 5 and Highway 97 and expanded statewide in 1996. Daily grant management and active promotion of the campaign were assumed by the Oregon State Sheriffs Association, Association Chiefs of Police and State Police Headquarters beginning in 1999. **Since then, the number of Oregon law enforcement agencies cooperating has more than doubled.**

Oregon's crash fatality and injury rates have dropped 45% and 34% respectively, since passage of the adult belt law in 1989. The law, coupled with active enforcement, has resulted in 2004 Oregon safety belt use rates of 93% (front seat occupants) and 94% (all seating), making Oregon one of the top four belt-use states in the U.S. This compares to a nationwide belt use average of 80% for drivers. Belt use is 87% among Oregon pickup truck drivers and 82% among sports car drivers.

The **Campaign** provides a unique opportunity for traffic enforcement agencies to increase their effectiveness through coordinated enforcement, training, and public education activities. During 2004, 38,755 safety belt overtime contacts were reported using \$696,591 of federal highway traffic safety funding. To put this expenditure in perspective, consider that safety belts are 45-65% effective in preventing fatalities/injuries and that the combined costs of one traffic death are estimated to be \$1,090,000 (National Safety Council, 2002.) In addition, 56,425 speed citations were issued and 5,577 DUII and 1,525 felony arrests occurred on safety belt overtime.

For more information on this Campaign, contact Carla Levinski, ODOT Occupant Protection Program Manager, 1-503-986-4199 or log on to: <http://www.odot.state.or.us/transafety>