



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

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### **Secure Load Emphasis Patrols Begin on Monday, April 15**

The Washington State Patrol will be conducting a 28-day, statewide “Secure Load” emphasis patrol beginning Monday, April 15.

In conjunction with the state Department of Ecology and Washington State Department of Transportation, the effort is intended to increase road and highway safety and prevent roadside litter.

Littering is punishable by fines ranging from \$50 to \$5,000 in Washington. The largest fines are for “lit debris” — primarily cigarettes — and for large items that can cause crashes. Failure to secure a vehicle’s load can result in a citation ranging from a \$228 fine to criminal charges, if items cause property damage or injuries.

“Unsecured loads pose a real danger to the traveling public,” said Lieutenant Mark Tegard of the Washington State Patrol. “Unsecured vehicle loads are no accident. They are dangerous, sometimes deadly. All drivers have a responsibility to make sure their loads are properly secured at all times.”

“Our concerns for public safety align with the State Patrol’s,” said Laurie Davies, who heads Ecology’s Solid Waste Management Program. “The Department of Ecology is also a steward of one of the most beautiful states in our country. Litter prevention measures like this are important because road debris can cause real environmental harm and is difficult to remove.”

“Roadside litter is a growing problem across our state even with the efforts of our crews, Adopt-A-Highway volunteers and Ecology Youth Corps,” said Pasco Bakotich, WSDOT’s Director of Maintenance Operations. “Because litter is completely preventable we also need the public’s help in keeping our state clean. Properly covering and tying down loads, for example, greatly reduces the amount of litter along roadways.”

A vehicle’s load is secure when no cargo can slide, shift, fall, sift onto the roadway, or become airborne.

Five Tips to secure your load:

- Tie down load with rope, netting or straps
- Tie large objects directly to the vehicle or trailer
- Cover the entire load with a sturdy tarp or netting
- Don’t overload the vehicle
- Always double check load to make sure all is secure

WSDOT electronic highway message signs will remind drivers where emphasis patrols are occurring. Emphasis patrols will end on May 12 but drivers with unsecured loads should always anticipate the attention of troopers as well as environmental and road officials working together to keep roadways safe, clean, and clear.

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