

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with your local news and commentary for Halloween – Tuesday, October 31, 2023.

This is from The Washington State Department of Transportation: on Tuesday, October 31, US 101 will be reduced to a single lane of alternating traffic east of the River Road overpass. Travelers in both directions can expect congestion and slowdowns approaching River Road while work is underway. This work is planned during daylight hours as warmer temperatures will assist with repairs. Work is weather-dependent and could be rescheduled. Wash DOT says, whenever near work zones please:

- Slow down – drive the posted speeds, they are there for your safety.
- Be kind – workers are out there helping to keep you safe and improve the roadways.
- Pay attention – both to workers directing you and surrounding traffic.
- Stay Calm – leave early; no meeting or appointment is worth risking someone's life.

Real-time traveler information is available from the WSDOT app (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/travel/mobile-app-and-social-media>) and the WSDOT Travel Center Map (<https://wsdot.com/Travel/Real-time/Map/?layers=traffic-flow%2Calert&base=wsdot&featuretype=alert&featureid=573264&extent=-124.04798410470919%2C47.84249325024843%2C-122.19816110666159%2C48.38254338383413&fromLink=true>). Travelers are encouraged to sign up for email updates (https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOT/subscriber/new?topic_id=WADOT_542) to get the latest information about road work on state highways in Clallam County and Jefferson County.

The Washington State Patrol (WSP), in partnership with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) and law enforcement agencies across the state, began the 'Home for the Holidays' traffic safety campaign this past weekend. The educational campaign continues through New Year's Eve with a focus on reminding and encouraging drivers to take extra precautions in adverse weather conditions such as snow, rain, ice, and fog. The fall and winter months also bring less daylight, making it important for drivers to maintain awareness for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and bicyclists.

The WSP historically observes an increase in collisions of all types during this time frame, as well as an increase of impaired drivers during the fall and winter months. According to preliminary WTSC data, there have been nearly as many fatal collisions through September of this year as compared to the same timeframe in 2022. Last year was a 32-year high for fatality collisions across Washington state.

According to the WTSC data, 776 lives were lost across the state due to traffic-related collisions in the months of October, November, and December from 2018 to 2022. Of those tragedies, 40% involved impaired drivers, 30% involved excessive speed, 16% involved distracted drivers, and 29% of those killed were pedestrians or pedal cyclists. Proactive choices made by all roadway users can lead to a safer trip, including:

- Buckle up and ensure all occupants are also properly seat belted before driving.
- Follow posted speed limits and slow as necessary in adverse weather and around vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.
- Increase following distance, especially in adverse weather or low light conditions.
- Choose to always drive sober. (Why does anybody need to say that?)
- Avoid distractions, such as the use of a hand-held cell phone or watching videos while driving. (Yeah, put down that book.)

Before hitting the road this holiday season, drivers are also asked to check the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) websites for road conditions, especially when traveling over mountain passes. For more information about the Home for the Holidays campaign, as well as tips for fall and winter driving, please visit <https://www.wsp.wa.gov/home-for-the-holidays/>.

One more transportation headache: the Edmonds-Kingston ferry route was running with one boat Monday after the M/V *Issaquah* replaced a boat that broke down on the Seattle-Bremerton route. The disruption was expected to last “until further notice” and cause lengthy delays, Washington State Ferries spokesperson Ian Sterling said. There was no second vessel available this week to fill in on the Edmonds route, and no timeline for when one will become available. So, ONE BOAT on the Edmonds/Kingston Ferry route – indefinitely.

The *Spokane* is the only boat running from Edmonds to Kingston. It can hold 188 cars. The reduction in service has been a systematic issue, Sterling said, as there were about 15 of the usual 21 ferries in operation due to unexpected breakdowns. Staff numbers have also been lower than usual, he added, contributing to the shortage. Sterling said, “To put it into perspective, I’ve never seen it this way. I’ve been here for nine years.”

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can reach out to us at news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.