

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

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### Numerous State Patrol Vehicles Struck In King County

**King County:** Since late 2017 to early this morning there have been 13 Washington State Patrol (WSP) vehicles struck in King County alone as the troopers were performing their duties which is concerning to WSP officials. Half these collisions were caused by impaired drivers. The other collisions were due to distracted driving or drivers not following the "Move Over" law. The following are just some of the collisions included in the 13.

#### December 26, 2017

Trooper Patoc was with a blocking disabled vehicle in the Eastgate area of I-90 when his patrol vehicle was struck and pushed into the disabled vehicle which then struck Trooper Patoc as he was outside the vehicle assisting the disabled. The causing driver was not impaired but the investigation showed that distraction was potentially involved. Trooper Patoc is still off work recovering from his injuries.



## January 9, 2018

Trooper Roberts was investigating a collision on the left shoulder of I-5 in the downtown Seattle area when a distracted driver struck his patrol vehicle. The driver then struck the vehicle that was involved in the original collision which then struck Trooper Roberts. Thankfully there were only minor injuries.

## February 14, 2018

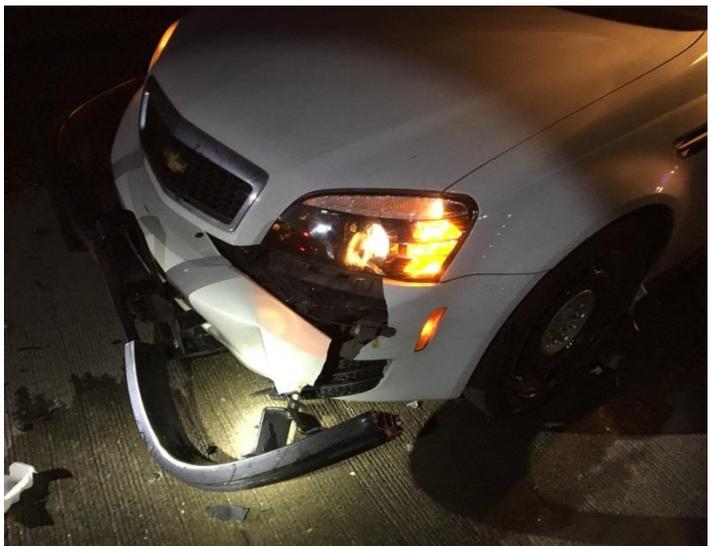
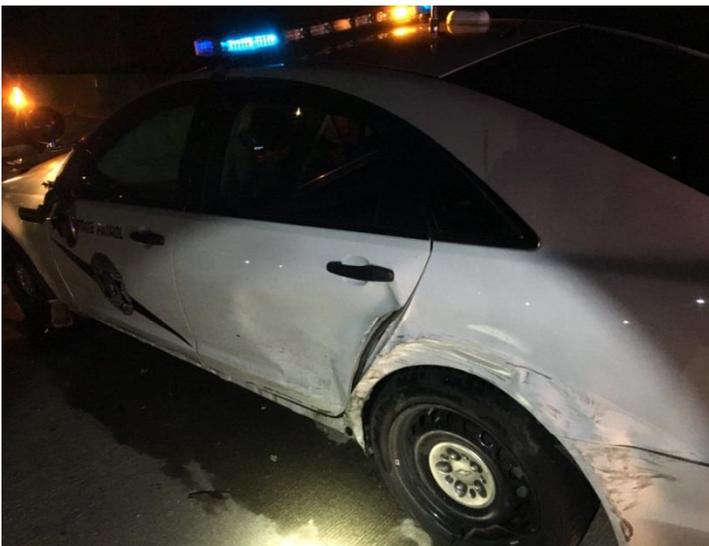
Trooper Gagnon was on the shoulder on EB I-90 when a semi sideswiped his patrol vehicle and continued. Thankfully Trooper Gagnon was not inside his vehicle and was able to avoid injury. This is a prime example of the "Move Over or Slow Down" law not being followed.

## March 1, 2018

Trooper Karnofski was on the left shoulder of I-5 investigating a collision when the patrol car was struck by another vehicle which fled the scene. Fortunately, Trooper Karnofski's vehicle was operable and chased the Hit and Run vehicle and subsequently arrested the driver for DUI.

## March 10, 2018

Trooper Goodin was on a traffic stop on the shoulder of SB I-5 near the Boeing Access Road when his vehicle was struck. The driver of the causing vehicle was arrested for DUI. Trooper Goodin was inside the vehicle at the time remains off work recovering from injuries.



**April 1, 2018**

Trooper Ballard was blocking lane 1 on I-5 in the Southcenter area at the scene of a car/pedestrian injury collision. The driver of the causing vehicle was arrested for DUI. Trooper Ballard did not sustain any injuries.



**April 11, 2018**

This last one occurred this morning about 1:55am SB I-5 just south of Albro. Trooper Draper and Trooper Arata were stopped on the right shoulder administering Field Sobriety Tests to a driver Trooper Draper had stopped. A 34 year old female was traveling SB I-5 and drifted onto the shoulder, striking Trooper Arata's patrol vehicle pushing it into Trooper Drapers vehicle. A fire ignited and the causing vehicle and the back end of Trooper Arata's vehicle were engulfed in flames. Thankfully no major injuries. The causing driver was booked into the King County Jail for investigation of DUI, Driving While Suspended and two misdemeanor warrants.



Captain Ron Mead, commander of WSP field operations for District 2 which encompasses all of King County, is alarmed by these incidents of patrol cars being struck. "Troopers are working tirelessly trying to protect the public from impaired and distracted driving, in addition to investigating collisions and keeping traffic flowing. This often requires they sit along the shoulder of the freeway, or even at times blocking lanes of the freeway, to carry out their duties. Although several troopers have been injured during these collisions, I am grateful none of those injuries has proven serious thus far" Mead said. To that end, Captain Mead has reiterated to his troopers that the days of giving warning to drivers not adhering to the 'Move Over' law should be over. The danger to first responders conducting their important work alongside the freeways is too great, and the resulting injuries to these first responders and citizens alike too real, to not step up enforcement. In addition, Captain Mead gives this simple advice: "***When you are driving, focus on driving and don't drive impaired. Troopers and other first responders are working inches from traffic driving by often at freeway speeds, and the resulting crashes can be catastrophic to them. They, like every motorist, deserve an opportunity to make it home at the end of their shifts.***"

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