

AGENCY AT A *glance* SO FAR THIS YEAR...

- 3,466 impaired drivers arrested
- 9,718 collisions investigated
- 55 fatality collisions
- 9,794 distracted driving contacts
- 8,259 seatbelt violations
- 35,405 aggressive driver contacts
- 101,746 excessive speed contacts
- 23,340 CMV inspections

TRAFFIC SAFETY
KEEPING DRIVER'S FOCUS ON THE ROAD

The WSP contacted over **28,000** distracted drivers in 2023

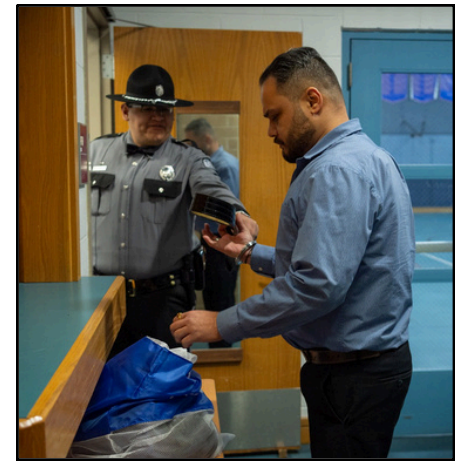
That's more than the five-year high of over **25,000** distracted driver contacts made in 2019

11% of last year's fatal crashes INVOLVED DISTRACTED DRIVERS

NEXT WEEK
Learn the results of the Washington State Inspector's Challenge



20th CVEO Basic Class begins



SHELTON, Wash. - This was the first week of training for the Washington State Patrol's (WSP's) 20th Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officer (CVEO) Basic Training Class. The new recruits will spend the next five and a half months gaining the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience needed to become well versed in state commercial motor vehicle laws. Their training will include commercial vehicle collision investigations, hazmat awareness, report writing, firearms training, and commercial vehicle inspections. Welcome to the WSP family, and best of luck to the 20th Class!

FOCUS: WSP Crime Laboratory



VANCOUVER, Wash. - As we end the month of April, we wanted to take the time to recognize the dedication and hard work of our agency's crime lab employees. April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and one of the important duties of the folks at the Washington State Patrol (WSP) Crime Lab is testing sexual assault kits.

Washington state requires all sexual assault kits within the state to be submitted for lab testing, and that the testing be completed within 45 days starting from lab submission to upload of any eligible DNA profile to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), a national database maintained by the FBI that contains DNA profiles from convicted offenders and DNA profiles from crime scene evidence left behind by perpetrators.

To meet this demand, the Washington State Patrol Crime Lab Division created a dedicated high-throughput sexual assault kit testing facility within its Vancouver Crime Lab, which included adding a new physical space, new equipment, and additional staff. The Vancouver Crime Lab currently has four Property & Evidence Custodians, two Lab Technicians, and 23 DNA Forensic Scientists who work as a team to process and test sexual assault kits from around the state.

The Crime Lab Division receives an average of 125 sexual assault kits each month and completes testing of each sexual assault kit through CODIS upload within an average of 40 days. In the past year, the Vancouver Crime Lab uploaded 695 DNA profiles of perpetrators developed from tested evidence to be searched in CODIS. Of those, 245 resulted in identifying a previously unknown suspect, and 35 resulted in linking to other criminal cases.

The team at the Vancouver Crime Lab is a key partner in how our state responds to sexual assault by not only providing testing and court testimony, but also acting in partnership and providing training to medical providers, law enforcement personnel, attorneys, and victim advocacy groups to help bring resolution for survivors of sexual assault.



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NATIONAL DNA DAY

STATEWIDE - We celebrated past and present members of the Washington State Patrol's DNA program during National DNA Day on Thursday, April 25. We appreciate their expertise and dedication to advancing the field of forensic DNA testing in support of our agency mission.

Following in her Grandma's footsteps

MARYSVILLE, Wash. - After some changes in her life, Jessica Blackburn contemplated the next steps in her journey and soon realized they mirrored those of her grandmother.

"I wanted to be like my grandma more than anything, and the only thing I've known was her dispatching," Jessica said.

Growing up, Jessica visited her grandma's dispatch center often.

"When I was a little girl, I would go trick-or-treating at her dispatch, meet all the officers, and as a teenager, I would drive to her work and spend my spare time there," Jessica said.

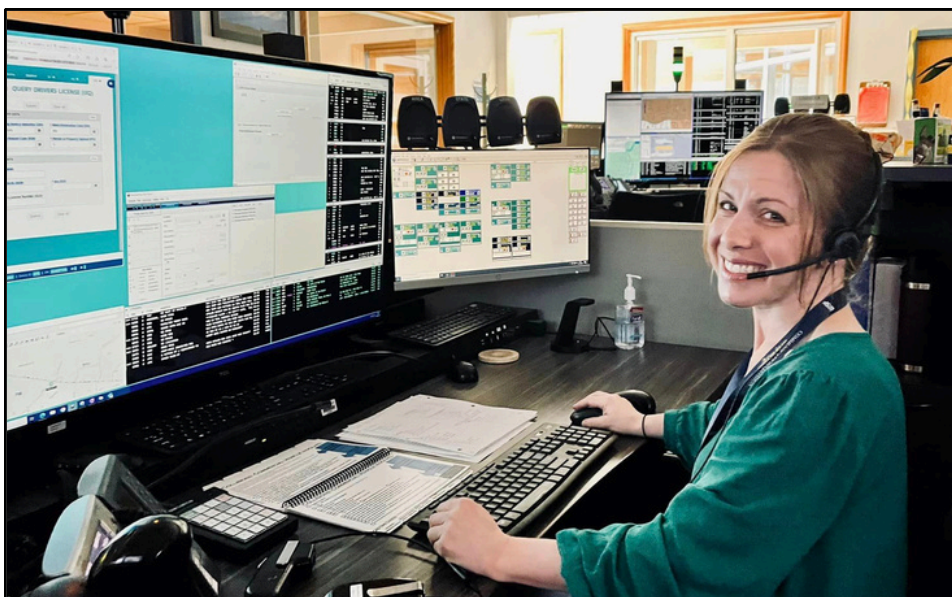
These visits to her grandmother's workplace were not just childhood memories; they were the foundation of Jessica's admiration for the profession and her grandma, and her love for the bustling yet profoundly meaningful environment.

Jessica recently joined the Washington State Patrol as one of the agency's newest Communications Officers, based in District 7 - Marysville.

As someone who has had to call 9-1-1, Jessica understands that being a dispatcher is more than just answering calls; it's about being a lifeline in someone's moment of crisis, a role she's committed to embracing fully. As she navigates her first year of training, Jessica is fueled by a profound sense of purpose and dedication, not just to the career itself but to the service of others—a value deeply instilled in her by her grandmother.

"My grandma was the most important person in my life," Jessica said. "She passed away almost 10 years ago, and I feel I can take on her legacy by becoming a dispatcher and following in her footsteps."

Although National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week has ended, sharing Jessica's story allows us to continue highlighting the important work our Communications Officers do behind the scenes 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and to thank 9-1-1 dispatchers and call-takers, past and present, for their service.



KIWANIS YOUTH LAW ENFORCEMENT CAREER CAMP

for Pacific Northwest High School Juniors & Seniors



UNLOCK THE ADVENTURE!

August 11-17, 2024
 Washington State Patrol Academy



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TREATING **MENTAL HEALTH**
AS SERIOUSLY AS YOU WOULD
 TREATING **PHYSICAL HEALTH**

We focus on helping others, and often forget about helping ourselves. Staying on our A-game mentally and physically helps ensure we can be there for not only our communities we serve, but our families and loved ones.

▶▶▶ **AWARE**

All of the jobs revolving around law enforcement - both on the commissioned and non-commissioned side - come with their fair share of stresses. Make sure you have the awareness and forethought to check on yourself and reflect on what you experience each day so you can have a good grasp of how you are actually feeling, both mentally and emotionally. Last month retired Navy Seal Steve Drum spoke on stress, and offers a few more tools regarding [The Mindset of Peak Performance](#) available on YouTube.

▶▶▶ **CONNECTED**

Mental health can affect your relationships - make sure you are setting healthy boundaries and practicing constructive communication to strengthen those connections with your friends and loved ones. Long hours, short staffing, and high stress calls all can affect how we are able to interact with those we love. Being aware of this, and fostering social circles outside of the job can help create a fulfilling and positive environment outside of work. If you find yourself needing someone to talk to, you also have agency resources including [Peer Support, Chaplains, and our Department Psychologist.](#)

▶▶▶ **BALANCED**

A good work-life balance is key for mental and physical health. It's crucial to ensure you have routines to help transition from being on the job to being at home. Often this can be a struggle, especially when going from high alert situations. Don't know where to start? Try using the app [Mindfulness Coach](#), and add it to your routine.



For additional resources or confidential support, contact WSP's own Dr. Zach Gerdes by calling (360) 586-8942 (office) or (360) 742-1379 (cell). You can also e-mail Zach.Gerdes@wsp.wa.gov or doc@wspwell.org (confidential).

YOUR WSP MONTHLY **FOCUS ON WELLNESS**

Mental Health May



THURSDAY, MAY 9

- Join Dora Gyarmati online at 2 p.m. for "[WSP Chatting With Dora](#)" to check in!
- Missed her April class? You can catch up by [visiting here](#) (Password: WSP2024withDora)

THURSDAY, MAY 23

- Join Dora Gyarmati in person or online for her second long-form class, "[Willpower Alone is Not Enough](#)" along with a deep dive into nutrition: "[Carbohydrates: the Good, Bad, and Ugly.](#)"
- In-person from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Helen Sommers Building in Olympia.
- Livestream [available here.](#)

PROTECTING & ENHANCING YOUR WELLNESS, STRENGTH, AND PERFORMANCE

SECOND ANNUAL SENSORY FRIENDLY EVENT
 With Law Enforcement

Sunday, May 5, 2024

Skagit County Fair Grounds
 501 Taylor St., Mount Vernon, Wa 98273

In addition to meeting law enforcement there will be local resources available to your families.

Please contact Trooper Luke Visser to reserve a spot. There are AM/PM times available.

Email Trooper Luke Visser
LUKE.VISSER@WSP.WA.GOV



*This event is designed for children and families with children on the Autism Spectrum.