

## **Secure Your Load - Properly**

**San Juan County, WA:** There are just 3 weeks left in the *Secure Your Load for Safer Roads* campaign that was launched in April by San Juan County to help islanders understand the benefits and proper procedures for securing loads on vehicles.

An unsecured load is defined as “a load that has not been fastened in or attached to a vehicle with tarps, rope, straps, netting, or chains, so as to prevent any part of the load or covering used from becoming loose, detached, or leaving the vehicle while the vehicle is moving.”

In 2019, alone, Washington State Patrol contacted 1,062 motorists for failing to secure their loads and every year in Washington, unsecured loads cause about 300 crashes and 30 injuries. Two Washington state laws, RCW 46.61.655 and RCW 70A.200.120, require drivers to ensure their vehicles are properly secured.

“Failing to secure a load, depending on the circumstances, could be charged up to a gross misdemeanor,” says San Juan County Sheriff Ron Krebs. “If [something that is unsecured] ends up causing an accident or injuring someone, then it could be charged as a criminal act.”

The Washington Department of Ecology suggests these seven steps to ensuring a secured load: Stock up on materials needed for properly securing items on your vehicle; Strap Down and securely fasten large items directly to your vehicle; Seal Tight and Cover any boxes, bags or garbage cans to keep contents from blowing away; Organize items making sure tall items lay flat on top of lighter cargo; Follow Through by running straps through and around items; Tidy Up by removing loose trash from your vehicle before getting on the roads; and Regularly Check your load while you’re driving by listening for unusual whipping or rattling sounds.

“We all enjoy the peaceful and serene nature of our islands. Please secure your loads and let’s keep our roadways clean, as well as safe,” says Krebs.

Follow the campaign on Instagram via @exchangeorcias, on Facebook through “The Exchange / Orcas Recycling Services” or on the ORS/The Exchange webpage <http://www.exchangeorcias.org/solid-waste/secure-your-load-for-safer-roads/>.