

CITY OF RENTON FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Renton to observe National “Secure Your Load” Day on June 6

Renton police will conduct on-going emphasis patrols to ensure compliance with state law

RENTON, WA – The City of Renton will observe National Secure Your Load Day on June 6, 2019. Renton Police Department will be supporting the day by conducting on-going special emphasis stops throughout the month of June to ensure drivers are following Washington state law.

“Drivers have a responsibility to secure their load before entering into traffic, said Mayor Denis Law. “So many of the life-changing accidents we’ve read about could have been avoided if this simple step was taken.”

During their patrols, Renton police will emphasize educating motorists on proper ways to secure their loads. The police department will issue citations to commercial vehicles that are in violation of the law.

For years, Renton resident Robin Abel has been leading the way in educating lawmakers, businesses and individuals about the dangers of driving with unsecured loads.

In 2004, Abel’s daughter, Maria Federici, was blinded and nearly killed after being struck by a piece of particle board that flew out of a trailer on I-405. At the time of the accident, there was no federal or state laws that made it a crime to operate a vehicle with a poorly secured load. In this case the driver was cited for a traffic infraction and fined.

Through Abel’s efforts in 2005, the Washington State Legislature passed House Bill 1478, which increased the fines and penalties for drivers transporting unsecured loads. Known as “Maria’s Law,” the vehicle operator can now be charged with a misdemeanor and criminal negligence if all or part of their load shifts or falls and causes substantial bodily harm to another. The law requires cargo to be secured by tarps, netting, or other tie-down materials.

“Unsecured loads and road debris are not freak accidents but frequent incidents and most are preventable with just a few minutes of time and a few dollars in equipment,” said Abel. “I thank the City of Renton for enthusiastically embracing this safety message. The city and its law enforcement professionals have gone out of their way to participate in Secure Your Load Day on June 6, and I am so grateful for their support,” says Abel, who has single-handedly led the charge to shift the traffic safety paradigm.

In Washington State, the fine for transporting an unsecured load is \$228. If an item falls off a vehicle and causes bodily harm, the driver faces gross misdemeanor charges and penalties of up to \$5,000 and/or up to a year in prison. In addition, unsecured loads arriving at King County transfer facilities or the landfill will be charged an additional \$25 fee.

If you see someone traveling with an unsecured load, Renton Police Department encourages you to call 9-1-1.

Both the [State of Washington Department of Ecology](#) and [King County's Solid Waste Division](#) have produced brochures with tips for securing loads. The county has also produced an instructional brochure that is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

King County's Solid Waste Division offers these tips to secure your load:

- Use a tarp. Covering items with a large, sturdy tarp is often a good way to secure a load. Remember to make sure the tarp is securely fastened to the vehicle.
- Tie the load down. Use rope, netting, straps or chains to tie large items directly to your vehicle.
- Layer the load. Put lighter items at the bottom and heavier items on top to help keep them in place. Don't forget to secure the heavy items to your vehicle.
- Don't overload it! Cramming too much stuff onto a vehicle increases the risk of items shifting, sliding or falling onto the roadway.
- Check it once, then check it again. Double check that items are securely anchored and any tarps are tied to the vehicle.

About the City of Renton

The City of Renton, Washington, with a population of 104,100 (2018), is located on the southeast shore of Lake Washington, just south of Seattle. Renton's strong economic base, diverse marketplace and favorable business climate have attracted the attention of nationally recognized companies that are providing employees and their families an outstanding quality of life. Renton is the home of Boeing, PACCAR, IKEA, the Seattle Seahawks, and the eternal resting place of Jimi Hendrix. More information can be found on our [website](#), [news releases](#), or [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Nextdoor](#) pages.

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