

Collision with Washington State Patrol Car in Clark County

Local News

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On April 26, 2009 at approximately 6:50 a.m. a three car collision occurred on southbound I-205 just south of Mill Plain, in Clark County.

Trooper Todd Gates had stopped a 2002 Mazda for speeding (72 mph in a 60 mph zone) when the Mazda pulled to the inside shoulder of I-205, just south of Mill Plain. The Mazda was driven by Hope L. Kelibner, 30 years old, from Vancouver. While Trooper Gates was sitting on the shoulder of the roadway with emergency lights activated, a grey 2006 Honda Accord driven by Jian A. Zhao, 44 years old, from Portland drifted onto the inside shoulder and struck the patrol car and the Mazda. Trooper Gates and Kelibner were both seated in their vehicles when the collision occurred. Trooper Gates was operating a 2008 Chevrolet Impala that was unmarked and part of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) Aggressive Driver Apprehension Team. Trooper Gates was trapped in his vehicle for a period of time and had to be extricated by Vancouver Fire Department personnel.

The investigation is on-going, but Zhao reported to investigators that he fell asleep. Trooper Gates, 39 years of age, was transported by ambulance to Southwest Washington Medical Center (SWWMC) with head lacerations and bruises to his shoulder. Kelibner complained of neck pain, but refused treatment by emergency personnel. Zhao was transported by ambulance to SWWMC complaining of soreness to his neck and back. The WSP would like to remind the public that Washington State law requires motorists to pull to the right when being motioned to stop by a police car. One of the most dangerous places for police officers during the course of their work day is the inside shoulder of the roadway.

Motorists often pull to the left rather than the right as required by law, jeopardizing everyone's safety.

The crash remains under investigation and no citations have been issued at this time.