

WSDOT teams with WSP to keep Shelton road construction safe

Local News

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Posted on : September 24, 2013 at 5:50 am

SHELTON — Motorists who ignore a construction detour may have some explaining to do. The Washington State Department of Transportation has enlisted the Washington State Patrol to help deter motorists from driving through a construction zone during night hours on US 101 north of Shelton.

Starting this week, state troopers will monitor the construction site and cite drivers who place themselves and workers at risk by not following detour signage.

“It’s a last resort to ask the Washington State Patrol to increase its presence,” said Project Engineer Steve Fuchs. “We’ve already added more detour signs, adjusted signs, and turned drivers back to dissuade people from coming through the work site. The only additional tool we have is enforcement.”

Between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. each weeknight and on occasional weekend nights, US 101 is closed to all traffic between East Purdy Cutoff Road/Skokomish Valley Road and East Eagle Point Drive.

Motorists traveling through the area are directed onto a 10 mile detour that uses Brockdale Road, McReavy Road, Dalby Road and State Route 106. Only those residents who access their homes as far as East Purdy Cutoff Road/Skokomish Valley Road on the north end of the construction zone, or East Eagle Point Drive on the south end of the construction zone, are allowed beyond the detour points.

“We understand that the detour is inconvenient and that motorists are tempted to stay on US 101,” said Olympic Region Administrator Kevin Dayton. “But safety has to take precedence. I’m talking about the safety of both the motorists and construction crews. A lot of activity is going on out there, and the added hazard of unexpected traffic puts everyone at risk.”

More than 300 dump truck loads of soil are removed from the construction zone each night as crews work to stabilize a slide-prone hillside along Purdy Canyon. Throughout the project, crews will remove 76,000 cubic yards of soil as they carve a new face into the hillside.

Under a contract with WSDOT, state troopers will increase their presence through the remainder of the project, which is scheduled to last through November. “Fines can range up to several hundred dollars for driving through a work zone,” said WSP Captain Chris Old. “It’s both safer and cheaper to simply follow the detour signage.”

Between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. each day, one lane of traffic is allowed through the construction zone. A temporary signal is used to direct one-way traffic.