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High Wind Warning for eastern Oregon

LA GRANDE, Ore. – Strong wind throughout northeast Oregon and around the state are creating challenging driving conditions for travelers. Gusts of wind can directly affect your vehicle's handling and steering. Indirect dangers can be created by downed trees, branches and other debris on to the road. High winds are particularly hazardous when operating or towing high profile vehicles such as motor homes, travel trailers and commercial trucks, especially when traveling while unloaded, or with light cargos.

Trees were blown over onto OR 204 (Weston-Elgin/Tollgate Hwy.) earlier today and a commercial truck was blown over on OR 11. The trees have been removed and OR 11 is currently open, but windy conditions may still impact highway travel as the storm continues this afternoon and tomorrow. Travelers are reminded to drive with extra caution, watch for debris and be prepared for delays.

In serve windy conditions, it is always advisable to drive only if absolutely necessary to do so, but if you must drive:

- Take the safest, most sheltered route. Avoid roads with lots of trees.
- Grip your steering wheel firmly throughout your journey. Strong winds are not consistent. Your car can be engulfed by a powerful gust of wind suddenly and without warning.
- All kinds of debris, from litter to tree branches can cause hazards in strong wind. Be watchful of such debris.
- To help give you a wide field of vision, keep a good distance away from any vehicle in front.
- Other vehicles, reacting to strong gusts and road debris, may themselves become a hazard, so keep a close eye on any that are near to you, especially if they are high-sided.
- Reduce your speed. This will allow you more time to deal with any handling or steering issuers caused by strong gusts of wind.
- If a storm knocks out power to traffic signals, treat intersections like an all-way stop. The driver who stops first goes first.
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- High winds combined with rain can further limit visibility and create standing water on the roadway. Slow down and be prepared for slick, wet roads.

The National Weather Service in Pendleton issued a High Wind Watch and Wind Advisories in effect through Thursday for sections of eastern Oregon including: the Grande Ronde Valley; southern Wallowa Valley; and the Blue Mountain foothills. Gusts in some area are estimated to reach 60 miles per hour.

Check www.TripCheck.com or call 511 / 800-977-6368 for update road conditions. Check www.NOAA.gov for weather updates.

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