

Multiple Crashes near Government Camp Close Highway 26

by Bend Weekly News Sources

OSP: "Freezing rain and icy conditions were a contributing factor"

Approximately a dozen vehicles, including commercial trucks and passenger cars, were involved in several crashes early Thursday morning on a three-mile stretch of Highway 26 about seven miles east of Government Camp, prompting closure of the highway for more than three hours. Icy conditions related to freezing rain was a contributing factor, according to a news release issued by Oregon State Police (OSP). Photos provided by OSP. The first of several crashes occurred on Highway 26 near milepost 65 about 5 a.m. November 2 and involved an eastbound commercial truck towing a flatbed trailer loaded with roofing materials. The driver lost control and the truck rolled, losing its load. The driver, Lewis Propper, 58, from Woodland, Washington, was not injured. A few minutes after that crash, a westbound 1998 Ford Expedition was approaching the roofing debris but its driver was unable to see the rolled-over trailer because of shining headlights from another truck. The Ford Expedition was driven by 45-year old Madras resident Clifford Kuther, was unable to stop and crashed into the overturned trailer. Kuther was not injured. During the next several minutes, more crashes began occurring involving vehicles losing control on the icy highway. One of these crashes involved a commercial truck transporting sheet rock that rolled over after its driver lost control. The driver was transported by a private party to Mt. Hood Medical Center with non-life threatening injuries. Additional names and information were not available at the time the news release was issued. Oregon Department of Transportation crews were kept busy with coordinating clean-up efforts, and were able to begin reopening sections of Highway 26 about three hours after the initial crash. Because no OSP troopers were on duty at the time of the incidents, troopers from Portland and Government Camp were called in from their homes to investigate.

No citations are expected to be issued, according to the release.

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