

Out-of-gas pickup begins multi-vehicle crash on Interstate-5

by Cheryl McDermott

SALEM, Ore. — A pickup that ran out of gas on Interstate 5 in Salem on Monday began a chain reaction of collisions involving two commercial trucks and trailers, one of which jack-knifed across traffic and blocked the northbound freeway lanes for three hours.

The pickup (above) ran out of gas, was hit by the black semi-truck, which was then hit by the green semi-truck (below), causing the first semi to jack-knife on Interstate-5 in south Salem, Ore. - OSP photos
According to an Oregon State Police (OSP) news release, all persons involved escaped injury.

The 1996 GMC pickup was northbound near milepost 262, just north of Kuebler Road interchange in south Salem, when about 8:50 a.m. the vehicle ran out of gas while in a construction zone, OSP Trooper Jim Ragon reported.

The driver of a semi-truck pulling a trailer, following immediately behind the pickup, told troopers that he had no choice but to attempt to stop because three vehicles in the left lane beside him prevented him from passing by. "The driver was unable to stop in time and ran into the back of the pickup," Trooper Ragon said.

Then, a second semi-truck following the first two vehicles slammed into the rear of the first commercial truck's trailer, causing it to jack-knife into a barrier wall.

The pickup's driver said that he was trying to steer toward the barrier wall and activate his emergency lights when he saw the first truck approaching before it hit his vehicle.

No citations were issued, OSP said, and troopers from the Salem Area Command office are continuing the investigation.

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