

Truck Driver Escapes Fiery Crash on Highway 97

by Bend Weekly News Sources

A California man luckily avoided serious injury Friday evening when his commercial truck drove off Highway 97 and struck several large trees. Following the investigation, an Oregon State Police trooper cited the driver for Careless Driving. On June 2, 2006 at approximately 8:10 p.m., Sarjeet Rather, age 35, from Tracy, California, was southbound on U.S. Highway 97 near milepost 144 when he drove across both lanes of oncoming traffic and plowed into several large trees causing the truck to catch fire. One tree was impaled into the passenger side of the truck and the front of the trailer gave way causing the load of sports drink to tear through and land in the back of the sleeper. Rather was wearing a safety belt and was not injured. He could not account for what caused the crash. According to OSP Senior Trooper Jason Hansen, "Mr. Rather was lucky in that he did not strike any oncoming traffic and he was seated in the only portion of the truck that did not receive major damage". Deschutes County Sheriff's Office and the Bend Fire Department assisted at the scene. One lane of northbound traffic was closed for approximately one hour.

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