

Oregon OSHA's

Vehicle safety

for small businesses in the construction industry



About this guide

“Vehicle safety for small businesses in the construction industry” is an Oregon OSHA Standards and Technical Resources publication. Thanks to the following individuals for advice and technical help.

- Allen Freauff, Oregon OSHA
- Barry Moreland, NIETC
- Bill White, Kerr Contractors
- Brian Treasure, Federated Insurance
- Dave Kaiser, NECA
- Dave Parsons, AGC
- Don Berg, Henkels & McCoy
- Gene Rushing, ESC
- Ron Haverkost, Oregon OSHA
- Stan Strickland, Travelers

Thanks to the following individuals for crafting the final document:

- Patricia Young: Oregon OSHA, layout and design
- Lisa Morawski: DCBS Communications, editing and proofing

Comments or suggestions for improving this guide?

Contact Ellis Brasch: (503) 947-7399, ellis.k.brasch@state.or.us.

Piracy notice: Reprinting, excerpting, or plagiarizing this publication is fine with us!

Please inform Oregon OSHA of your intention as a courtesy.



Topic category: Vehicles



www.orosha.org

Contents

Introduction	4	Management	13
Vehicles	5	Vehicle safety policy	13
Vehicle selection	5	Driver records	13
Upgrades and after-market equipment	5	Reporting crashes, injuries, and other incidents	14
Securing and carrying loads	6	Licensing	14
Emergency equipment	6	Using personal vehicles for company business	14
Walk-around inspections	7	Training	15
Seat belts	7	Oregon rules for highway motor vehicles	16
Maintenance	7	Oregon DMV	16
Driving environment	8	Oregon OSHA	16
Schedules and routes	8	Oregon OSHA Services	17
Weather	8	Oregon OSHA's Vehicle Safety CD	inside back cover
The driver	10		
Defensive driving	10		
Aggressive driving	10		
Distracted driving	11		
Impaired driving	11		
Backing up	11		
Crashes	12		



Introduction

It's raining and the driver of a flatbed trailer loaded with bags of grass seed nods off for a moment and drifts into the concrete divider, scattering debris across the northbound highway. A pick-up truck swerves to avoid the debris and runs into the guardrail. The driver of a southbound SUV slows to look and is immediately rear-ended by another vehicle whose driver is talking on a cell phone. The resulting pileup stops traffic on every feeder road in a 15-mile radius.

Incidents like this one happen all too often, making motor vehicle crashes the leading cause of unintentional injury and death in Oregon and across the nation. Motor vehicle crashes have far-reaching effects on victims and their families and cost Oregon employers millions of dollars annually.

Driving is part of doing business at many workplaces. If you're an employer, you should manage motor vehicle safety just as carefully as you manage any other aspect of your business. An effective motor vehicle safety program is one of the best ways for employers to protect their employees and control costs.



Check out this guide if you're a construction small-business owner whose employees don't need a commercial driver's license to drive company vehicles or if you're the employee who logs the miles. We want all of you to get to your destination and back — safely.



The enclosed CD has a sample vehicle safety program that you can modify and use as your own.



This guide covers motor vehicle safety rules that apply when you're driving in Oregon. Driving rules may be different when you're on the road in another state; know the motor vehicle safety rules that apply before you leave.



Vehicles

Vehicle selection

When selecting a vehicle, consider the number of passengers and the loads you're hauling. *Will you transport a crew? Will you be pulling a trailer? Will you be installing an overhead rack to carry items such as pipe or ladders? Will you need extendable mirrors so that you can see around wide truck boxes?*

Make sure your vehicle has appropriate tires for the weather and load. If you're frequently carrying heavy loads or towing, consider a vehicle with heavy-duty suspension or a pickup truck with four wheels on the rear axle.

Don't overlook crashworthiness. You can learn about the safety of a particular vehicle make and model at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Web site: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>.



Upgrades and after-market equipment

Before you purchase items such as trailer hitches, cargo racks, or custom tires and wheels, make sure that they're appropriate for the vehicle, safe for drivers, and legal for street use. Equipment that has one of the following labels is probably not street-legal in Oregon:

- "For off-road use only"
- "For show use only"
- "Check local laws and ordinances for use"



Be wary of products that say "DOT Certified" or "SAE Certified." The DOT (United States Department of Transportation) and SAE (SAE International) don't certify products.



For more information on after-market equipment, go to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Web site: http://egov.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/VEH_Equipment.shtml.

Securing and carrying loads

Are you sure that 10-foot ladder you're hauling in the back of the pickup will stay there when you're on the freeway? Unsecured and poorly secured items are like missiles when they become airborne. They can harm your passengers or those in vehicles behind you. Make sure such items are properly stored and secured — inside and outside the passenger compartment.

Use tie-down straps that are in good condition and rated for the load you'll carry. Ratcheting tie downs are better than bungee cords or tie downs that just pull tight.

Install mounts to secure loads that you haul frequently in the same vehicle or trailer. For example, you can clamp PVC pipe to a trailer to hold brooms or rakes. Install a rack over the truck bed to carry items such as ladders and pipe.

Make sure that trailer connections are secure and use drag chains when they're legal. Tarps should be snug and not flap. Check your load after you've driven a short distance to make sure it hasn't shifted. Don't pile items higher than the sidewalls of the truck bed or trailer.

Loading service vans. Service vans present unique loading and handling challenges. Many service vans have equipment racks installed as an after-market item. Frequently these racks are loaded with supplies of varying weight, tools of all types, and other items. The weight of the rack and the load can change the handling characteristics of the van. When loading a service van, consider the height and weight of the items on the top rack as well the weight distribution of items on the interior racks.



What you carry in your vehicle and how you load it may affect handling and braking; ensure that items are properly distributed and that they won't shift when you're on the road.



Overload a vehicle and you increase stopping distance, rollover risk, and wear-and-tear on brakes, tires, and the driveline — and you waste fuel.



Emergency equipment

You may not know when a highway emergency will happen but you can be prepared by ensuring that your vehicle has essentials for dealing with roadside emergencies. Consider items such as the following:

- Flashlight
- Reflective safety vest
- Light sticks
- Fire extinguisher
- Tire inflator or sealant
- Reflective triangles or flares

Know where the items are and how to use them safely.

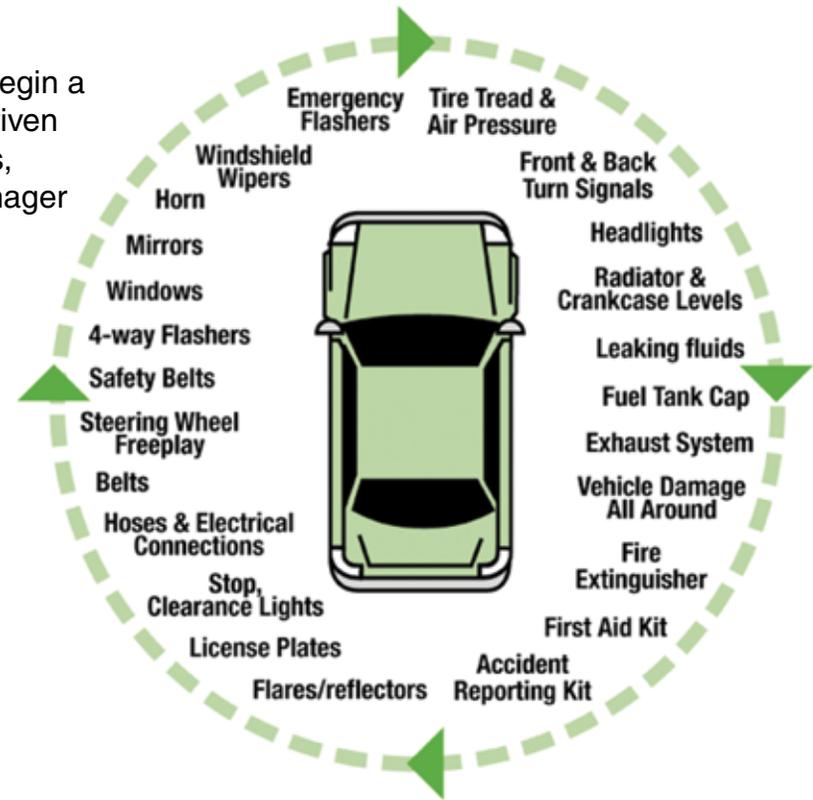


Walk-around inspections

Always check your vehicle for safety-related problems before you begin a trip. A pre-trip safety check is even more important if you haven't driven the vehicle before. Check fuel and fluid levels, tire pressure, mirrors, windshield wipers, lights, and brakes. Report problems to your manager or supervisor before you use the vehicle.

Seat belts

Oregon has a mandatory seat belt law, so you must buckle up and make sure your passengers do too. Seat belts are the most effective way to prevent deaths and serious injuries in traffic crashes.



A quick walk-around inspection will help you identify safety-related problems before you begin your trip.

– Courtesy of Evergreen Safety Council

Maintenance

A vehicle that isn't properly maintained wastes fuel and may be unsafe to drive. An engine tune-up at regular intervals improves fuel economy and reduces the risk of a breakdown that could tie up traffic or cause a crash.



Vehicles should have maintenance checkups on a regular schedule such as *calendar days, miles driven, or hours operated*. Check your vehicle's owner's manual for periodic maintenance intervals.

Driving environment

Schedules and routes

To shorten driving times, choose routes through arterial streets and avoid residential streets and school zones. When possible, schedule work so that you can avoid rush hour traffic. Overtime, long work weeks, and driving at night can cause driver fatigue and increase the risk of a crash.

Weather

Reduced visibility and slick roads are typical bad-weather hazards. When the weather turns nasty:

- **Slow down.** Bad weather calls for slower speeds.
- **Increase your braking distance.** Apply brakes sooner and more gently when roads are slippery.
- **Increase your visibility.** When you turn your wipers on, turn on your headlights too. Headlights must be on from sunset to sunrise.



If you need to drive in bad weather, make sure your vehicle's wiper blades are in good condition, the washer fluid level is topped up, and the headlights and tail lights are working.



Before you leave, know the road conditions on your route. Check the Oregon Department of Transportation's TripCheck page: <http://www.tripcheck.com>



ODOT's "TripCheck" Web site gives you current road conditions on major roads throughout the state.

Getting traction in winter. If you do much winter driving in Oregon, you've probably seen the Oregon Department of Transportation SNOW ZONE signs that tell you current requirements for chains or traction tires. Here's a summary:

- **Carry chains or traction tires.** You must have chains or traction tires in or on your vehicle, they must be the right size for your vehicle, and they must comply with DOT's chain requirements.
- **Chains required on vehicles towing or over 10,000 GVW.** You must use chains if your vehicle is towing or rated more than 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW). Chains must also be used on a trailer or vehicle being towed if it has a brake that operates while in tow.
- **Chains required; traction tires allowed on vehicles under 10,000 GVW.** You must use chains if your vehicle is towing or weighs more than 10,000 pounds GVW. If your vehicle weighs 10,000 pounds GVW or less and is not towing, you must use chains or traction tires.



Traction tires include studded tires and snow tires that have a mountain/snowflake emblem on the sidewall.



During severe winter weather, ODOT may require all vehicles to use chains, known as a conditional closure.



The driver

Defensive driving

Be alert! The most important part of defensive driving is anticipating the actions of other drivers. Know how to react (responsibly) to other drivers and changes in the driving environment. Watch for pedestrians and bicyclists and monitor yourself — your physical and mental condition affect how you drive.

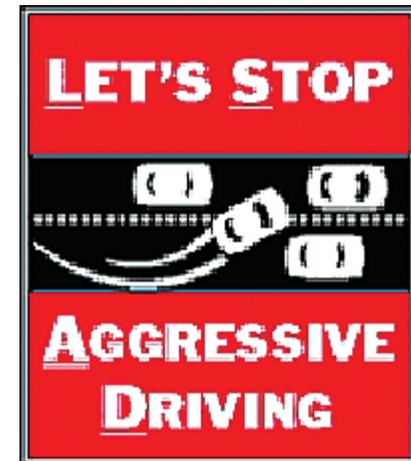


Rear-ending other vehicles is a leading cause of vehicle accidents. Maintain a three-second following distance to give you time to react and stop safely. Increase your following distance during adverse weather and when you drive larger or heavier vehicles.

Aggressive driving

Some drivers will do almost anything to get to their destination — tailgating, weaving in traffic, ignoring traffic lights and the rights of other drivers. It's called aggressive driving. It's dangerous and causes an increasing number of traffic crashes. Aggressive driving is different than media-inspired road rage, in which the driver uses a vehicle as a weapon or physically assaults another driver. Road rage is a criminal offense.

Plan ahead, allow plenty of time to reach your destination, and check traffic conditions before you leave.



Distracted driving

Now, everyone seems to be talking or texting on cell phones while they're driving — but driving is not the time for multi-tasking. You make more than 200 traffic-related decisions per mile when you're driving so it's critical to focus only on driving. Distracted driving is a factor in 25-30 percent of motor vehicle crashes. Driving should be your only job when you're behind the wheel.



Pull off the road when you need to talk, text, or read e-mail on your cell phone. The crash risk with a hands-free model is just as great as using a hand-held phone.

Impaired driving

Alcohol, some prescription drugs, over-the counter medications, and illegal drugs can impair your ability to drive safely.

Drivers who have a blood-alcohol level of 0.08 percent or higher are considered intoxicated under Oregon's implied consent law. (If you're under 21, you fail the test at any percentage.) This law says that by driving a motor vehicle you consent to a breath, blood, or urine test if a police officer asks you. Refusing to take a test is admissible as evidence in court.



Alcohol is a factor in 38 percent of fatal motor vehicle crashes in Oregon.

Drowsiness also increases your risk of a crash and may be significantly underreported in police crash investigations. These crashes often occur on rural highways when drivers are alone — usually late at night or early in the morning. Most pain medications and many drugs that you take for a headache, cold, or hay fever will make you drowsy and may affect your ability to drive safely.

Backing up

How many pickup trucks have you seen with dents in their tailgates? The damage probably happened because an object was hidden in a blind spot when the driver was backing up. All vehicles have blind spots to the side and the rear. The larger your vehicle and its load, the larger the blind spot. A driver may not be able to see the ground from the rear-view mirror for 50 feet or more. Blind spots can also hide poles, vehicles, or people. A full-size pickup with a toolbox in the bed can have a blind spot large enough to hide a compact car.

Backing up — safe practices:

- Try to position your vehicle so that you don't have to back up.
- Back into the space if possible when you're parking.
- Back to the left if possible so that you can see objects on the driver's side.
- Use a back-up alarm to warn others.
- Have a spotter guide your vehicle when you're backing up.

Have you ever backed up over something that you forgot to put in the pickup? Get out of your vehicle and look before you back up.



Crashes

Was that fender-bender really an accident? Most crashes, wrecks, and collisions aren't accidents. Usually they're caused by drivers' errors — and drivers' errors are preventable.

If you're involved in a crash, you must do the following:

- **Stop at once.** If there are no injuries and vehicles can be safely moved, they should be moved to the right shoulder or out of travel lanes as soon as possible. Blocking lanes causes major traffic congestion and may result in secondary crashes.
- **Secure the scene.** If vehicles cannot be moved from traffic lanes, place warning devices such as flares or reflective triangles far enough back to warn other motorists and prevent further accidents and injury.
- **Help the injured when necessary.** In some cases the injured should not be moved until an ambulance or someone trained in first aid arrives. If the victim is dead or unconscious, you must stay at the scene until a police officer arrives. Failure to do so is a "hit and run," a serious traffic crime.
- **Exchange information.** Give your name, address, driver license number, license plate number of your vehicle, and your insurance information to other driver, passengers, or any injured pedestrian.

Reporting crashes. You must submit a report to Oregon DMV (Driver and Motor Vehicle Services) if:

- Damage to the vehicle you were driving is more than \$1,500.
- Damage to property other than a vehicle is more than \$1,500.
- Damage to any vehicle is greater than \$1,500 and any vehicle is towed from the scene of the accident.
- The crash causes any injury or death.
- You own the vehicle involved in a reportable crash and the driver fails to report the crash.



A police report doesn't replace the report that you must submit to DMV. Include as much information as you can about where, when, and how the crash happened. If you are the driver or owner of a vehicle involved in the crash, your report must show the name of your insurance company and the policy number. You can get report forms at your local DMV office, on the DMV Web site (www.OregonDMV.com), or from a police department or sheriff's office.



Management

Vehicle safety policy

Your company should have a vehicle safety policy that states its commitment to employees' safety and describes their responsibilities as drivers and passengers. The policy should cover employees' responsibilities when they use any vehicle as an agent of the company: for example, company vehicles for personal use, personal vehicles for company business, and rental or leased vehicles used for business. Employees also should acknowledge, in writing, that they have read and understood the policy. (See the sample policy on the enclosed CD.)

Driver records

A driver record includes reports of convictions for traffic violations and crimes, suspensions, revocations, cancellations of driving privileges, and other related information.

Prospective employees should know that the company will review their driver record and check references from previous employers as part of the hiring process.

When evaluating driver records consider the following:

- Number of moving violations.
- Severity of moving violations.
- Prior license suspension.
- Previous crashes or incidents.
- DUI and DWI history.

Review employees' driving records at least annually.



Oregon DMV offers an Automated Reporting Service (ARS) for employers that produces a court-printed driving record when a conviction, accident, or suspension is posted to one of their employee's driving records. For more information about the ARS, call (503) 945-5427 or (503) 945-5428.



Reporting crashes, injuries, and other incidents

Your company should have a written procedure that tells employees what to do if they're involved in a crash or there's an injury. The procedure should identify who to notify and what forms are necessary to report the incident. Employees should report incidents to a manager or supervisor immediately.

Review all incidents to determine why they occurred and how to prevent them from happening again. Identify what caused the incident and take necessary actions to prevent it from happening again.

Licensing

Most job-related driving requires either a Class C or a commercial driver license (CDL). Indicate the type of license that employees need in their job descriptions.

A Class C driver license allows a person who is at least 18 years old to drive a car, van, pickup, or panel truck that has a loaded weight not more than 26,000 pounds or a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) not more than 26,000 pounds.

A Class C license holder can also tow the following:

- A single vehicle, including a trailer or travel trailer, that has a loaded weight of 10,000 pounds or less or a GVWR of 10,000 pounds or less.
- A trailer more than 10,000 pounds, if the combined weight of the towing vehicle and trailer is not more than 26,000 pounds.

Drivers must have a commercial driver license to operate certain trucks, buses, or vehicles carrying passengers or hazardous materials. See the Oregon Commercial Motor Vehicle Manual for more information about commercial driver licensing.

Using personal vehicles for company business

Many companies that allow their employees to use personal vehicles on company business have written policies that describe how the vehicles must be used. Drivers who use their personal vehicles should maintain the same standards for equipment, inspections, and maintenance as company-owned vehicles.



Require employees who do company business in a motor vehicle — personal or company-owned — to sign an agreement that they will follow all company vehicle safety policies and procedures.

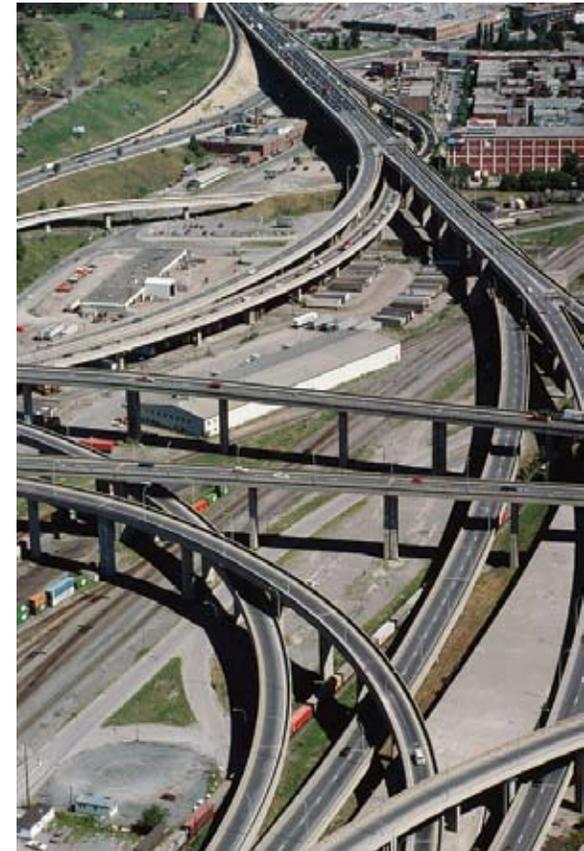
Training

New hires are more likely to have motor vehicle accidents than veteran employees. Require new hires to participate in safe-driving training as soon as possible after they're hired and consider conducting a driving road test to observe their driving skills. Other employees should have the opportunity to periodically update their driving knowledge and skills. Key training topics cover:

- Defensive driving skills
- Substance abuse policy
- Distracted driving hazards
- Characteristics of aggressive driving
- Vehicle inspection procedures
- Necessary emergency equipment



Oregon OSHA's Education section has a four-hour workshop on motor vehicle safety. Motor Vehicles: Planning and Safe Practices (Workshop #220) is offered to employers and employees throughout the year. Go to www.orosha.org and click on the "Education" link for workshop schedules.



Oregon rules for highway motor vehicles

Oregon DMV

Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicle Services Vehicle Code Book. Includes requirements for vehicle registration, driver licensing, and rules of the road. (www.oregon.gov/ODOT/DMV/forms/vehiclecodebk.shtml)

Oregon OSHA

- **437-002-0223 Oregon Rules for Commercial and Industrial Vehicles**
- **437-002-2224 Vehicle Drivers and Riders** (Subdivision 2/N, General Industry)
- **437-002-2225 Vehicles for Highway and Road Operation** (Subdivision 2/N, General Industry)
- **437-003-3224 Vehicle Drivers and Riders** (Subdivision 3/O, Construction)
- **437-003-3225 Vehicles for Highway and Road Operation** (Subdivision 3/O, Construction)



Oregon OSHA Services

Oregon OSHA offers a wide variety of safety and health services to employers and employees:

Consultative Services

- Offers no-cost, on-site safety and health assistance to help Oregon employers recognize and correct workplace safety and health problems.
- Provides consultations in the areas of safety, industrial hygiene, ergonomics, occupational safety and health programs, assistance to new businesses, the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP), and the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP).

Enforcement

- Offers pre-job conferences for mobile employers in industries such as logging and construction.
- Inspects places of employment for occupational safety and health hazards and investigates workplace complaints and accidents.
- Provides abatement assistance to employers who have received citations and provides compliance and technical assistance by phone.

Appeals, Informal Conferences

- Provides the opportunity for employers to hold informal meetings with Oregon OSHA on concerns about workplace safety and health.
- Discusses Oregon OSHA's requirements and clarifies workplace safety or health violations.
- Discusses abatement dates and negotiates settlement agreements to resolve disputed citations.

Standards & Technical Resources

- Develops, interprets, and provides technical advice on safety and health standards.
- Provides copies of all Oregon OSHA occupational safety and health standards.
- Publishes booklets, pamphlets, and other materials to assist in the implementation of safety and health standards and programs.
- Operates a Resource Center containing books, topical files, technical periodicals, and a video lending library.

Public Education & Conferences

- Conducts conferences, seminars, workshops, and rule forums.
- Coordinates and provides technical training on topics such as confined space, ergonomics, lockout/tagout, and excavations.
- Provides workshops covering management of basic safety and health programs, safety committees, accident investigation, and job safety analysis.
- Manages the Safety and Health Education and Training Grant Program, which awards grants to industrial and labor groups to develop training materials in occupational safety and health for Oregon workers.

For more information, call the OR-OSHA office nearest you. (All phone numbers are voice and TTY.)

Salem Central Office

350 Winter St. NE, Rm. 430
Salem, OR 97301-3882

Phone: (503) 378-3272

Toll-free: (800) 922-2689

Fax: (503) 947-7461

en Español: (800) 843-8086

Web site: www.orosha.org

Portland

1750 NW Naito Parkway, Ste. 112
Portland, OR 97209-2533
(503) 229-5910

Consultation: (503) 229-6193

Salem

1340 Tandem Ave. NE, Ste. 160
Salem, OR 97303
(503) 378-3274

Consultation: (503) 373-7819

Eugene

1140 Willagillespie, Ste. 42
Eugene, OR 97401-2101
(541) 686-7562

Consultation: (541) 686-7913

Bend

Red Oaks Square
1230 NE Third St., Ste. A-115
Bend, OR 97701-4374
(541) 388-6066

Consultation: (541) 388-6068

Medford

1840 Barnett Road, Ste. D
Medford, OR 97504-8250
(541) 776-6030

Consultation: (541) 776-6016

Pendleton

721 SE Third St., Ste. 306
Pendleton, OR 97801-3056
(541) 276-9175

Consultation: (541) 276-2353

Oregon OSHA's
Vehicle safety
for small businesses in the
construction industry



