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TIP OF THE WEEK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNLAWFUL LIGHTS ON MOTOR VEHICLES

With the sun setting earlier in the fall and winter, it is easy to notice the variety of headlights on the road. There can be confusion about the color of lights vehicles can lawfully displayed while travelling on Oregon's public highways. Although there may be *after-market* headlights, bulbs, and light bars available at local shops, including those with a blueish or greenish color, many are not legal to use in Oregon. Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 816.050 states that headlights shall show a white light described in Standard Number 108 of the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS).

ORS 816.360 also addresses the use of prohibited lighting equipment for motor vehicles in Oregon. The penalty for not complying with this law, should a motorist be cited, is a Class C infraction. The fine imposed by a court can range from $80 to $500.

The law states the following:

- All headlamps must be white in color as defined by Society of Automotive Engineers and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) 108. White lamps have been tested to meet all headlamp requirements.
- Maximum wattage allowed in a headlight or accessory light is 70 watts.
- FMVSS 108 disallows any color coating on headlights and/or headlight bulbs.
- Blue and green lamps are designated for use on emergency vehicles only.
- Red lamps to front are reserved for emergency vehicles and school bus warning lamps.
- Colored bulbs give a distorted headlamp pattern, which may prevent the driver from seeing a person or object at the road edge or starting to cross the road.
- Blue or other colored lights in the taillights of a motor vehicle are also prohibited, unless the vehicle was manufactured before 1959.

Markings on headlights and their packaging typically indicate if the product is Department of Transportation (DOT) approved. If the bulb or headlight packaging doesn't include this information, more research should be conducted before making your purchase.

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