MARIA'S STORY

Just before midnight on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2004, Maria Federici was driving home from work.

She was in the southbound lanes of I-405 at Renton near Northeast 30th, when an entertainment center fell from the back of a trailer in front of her. A 2- by 6-foot piece of particle board flew through her windshield, hitting her in the face.

The other driver did not stop.

She was critically injured and taken to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. Doctors told her mother her injuries were so severe that her survival was hopeless.

Miraculously, she survived. However, Maria has permanently lost her eyesight and has had to endure a complete facial reconstruction, multiple surgeries, and hours upon hours of grueling physical therapy.

If you don't think litter can hurt, just ask Maria.

Please secure your load!

For more information on Maria, you can visit her website at *http://www.mariasmiracle.com*

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If you need this publication in an alternate format, please contact the Solid Waste & Financial Assistance Program at 360-407-6900. For persons with a speech or hearing impairment call 711 for relay service or 800-833-6388 for TTY.

Litter and it will hurt.

For More Information visit
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/litter

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Q: HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO SECURE YOUR LOAD?

A: A few seconds more than it takes to destroy someone's life.

HOW CAN YOU SECURE YOUR LOAD?

Tips For Securing Loads

When using any vehicle or trailer to haul material, take a few minutes to secure the load.

Tie down with rope, bungee cords, netting, or straps. Tie large items directly to your vehicle.

Consider covering the load with a sturdy plastic or canvas tarp or a net.

Lighter goes lower. Put lighter weight things at the bottom of the load.

Don't Overload. Keep material level with truck bed or trailer unless tied down, netted, or tarped.

Always double-check your load.

Become familiar with local laws. Some communities have ordinances that require loads to be covered, not just secured.

WHY SHOULD YOU SECURE YOUR LOAD?

1 IT SAVES LIVES

Stories like Maria's are all too common. Across North America, road litter, either dumped on purpose by motorists or accidental fall-outs from unsecured loads, causes 25,000 accidents every year, nearly 100 of them fatal. Road litter poses a serious hazard here in Washington too. On average, there are 350 accidents involving road debris on state highways each year. *(Source: Washington State Department of Transportation)*

2 IT'S THE LAW

No vehicle shall be driven or moved on any public highway unless such vehicle is... loaded as to prevent any of its load from dropping, sifting, leaking, or otherwise escaping. (Source: RCW 46.61.655) State law specifically refers to "secured" loads. **Please be aware that your community may have a local ordinance that goes beyond the state law and requires loads to be covered.** Please check with local authorities to be sure you are in compliance.

3 IT COSTS MONEY

The fine for transporting an unsecured load is currently $194. If an item falls out of or off of your vehicle and causes bodily injury, you will be charged with a gross misdemeanor, which carries a penalty up to $5,000 and may include jail time. If the item causes property damage, you'll be facing a misdemeanor. The fine for littering something as small as a piece of paper is $103 and can go up to $5,000 for bigger items such as a mattress or other piece of furniture. Covering or securing your load will keep money in your pocket.

4 IT PREVENTS LITTER

No person shall throw, drop, deposit, discard, or otherwise dispose of litter upon any public property in the state... whether from a vehicle or otherwise. (Source: RCW 70.93.060[1])

34% of the litter-related violations issued by Washington State Patrol in 2003 were for a failure to secure a load and an additional 22% were issued for debris escaping from those loads. It is estimated that unsecured loads cause up to 25% of roadside litter. *(Source: www.ci.seattle.wa.us)*