



# UNIVERSITY TRANSPORTATION CENTER RESEARCH BRIEF

## Evaluation of the Idaho (Bicycle) Stop Laws in the Pacific Northwest

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### Background

During the 2019 legislative session, the Oregon legislature passed a bill legalizing a similar law to the “Idaho Stop” that became effective January 1, 2020 (OSL, 2019). The new Oregon law allows any bicyclist approaching an intersection regulated by a stop sign or flashing red

light to proceed through the intersection without stopping. Under this new law bicyclists are required to yield to traffic and pedestrians in the intersection and cannot proceed if doing so creates an “immediate hazard”. The name “Idaho Stop” refers to a similar law that was passed by Idaho’s Legislature in 1982. The

Idaho law was amended in 2006 to change the treatment of traffic signals by bicyclists from a yield condition to a stop-then-yield except for right-turning cyclists, which remained a yield condition (Bicycle Law, 2009). The states of Delaware, Arkansas, and parts of Colorado have implemented various versions of the Idaho Stop. Washington Bikes, a statewide bicycle advocacy group in Washington State, listed the “Safety Stop” (Idaho Stop) as its second highest priority issue for the 2020 State Legislative Session (Washington Bikes, 2019). Washington State Senator Billig (representing Spokane) and Representative Fitzgibbon (Burien) were prime sponsors in the Senate and House, respectively, for a bill implementing the proposed “Safety Stop” which would have been similar to the law in Oregon and apply only to stop signs.



### Research Project

This project seeks: 1) to clarify the anticipated safety impact of the Stop as Yield (“Idaho Stop”) for all roadway users in Oregon (and its potential application in neighboring states such as Washington where such a law is being considered), and 2) to evaluate the historical impact this law has had in the state of Idaho since adoption in the early 1980s. This research will include both 1) an on-line expert survey sent to transportation agency staff in the region who have experience with the Idaho Stop and 2) Human-in-the-loop simulator studies using the bicycle and driving simulator at Oregon State University to collect data on likely cyclist and driver responses to varying conditions. This research directly addresses the PacTrans topic of Traffic Safety by determining how the “Idaho Stop” style laws will impact / has impacted safety-relevant behaviors of traffic crashes on Oregon, Washington, and Idaho roadways for bicyclists and drivers alike. Surrogate safety measures will be used to determine the potential risk the new law poses for bicyclist and motorist conflicts at intersections. The findings will lead to a better understanding of the implications of the new law in Oregon and if it could be adopted safely elsewhere.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The research team consisted of David Hurwitz of Oregon State University, Kevin Chang of the University of Idaho, and Rhonda Young of Gonzaga University.

### ABOUT THE FUNDERS

This research was funded by the Pacific Northwest Transportation Consortium, with additional support from the Oregon State University, the National Institute for Advanced Transportation Technology, and Gonzaga University.

### EXPECTED DATE OF COMPLETION

August 2022

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://depts.washington.edu/pactrans/research/projects/evaluation-of-the-idaho-bicycle-stop-laws-in-the-pacific-northwest/>