



## OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

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# TIP OF THE WEEK

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ULAWFUL LIGHTS ON MOTOR VEHICLES

There appears to be some confusion among some motorists about the color of lights that can be lawfully displayed on motor vehicles while travelling on Oregon's public highways. Your Sheriff's Office receives calls from time to time inquiring if a variety of colored lamps can be lawfully displayed on motor vehicles. Some callers express concern over the use of some colored lights, especially those involving headlights.

There are a number of AFTER-MARKET bulbs and headlights appearing on some motor vehicles that emit a blueish or greenish color. The argument that a person purchased the bulbs, headlights or "light bars" at the local car parts store is not the standard used to determine if they're legal to use or not 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 addresses the use of prohibited lighting equipment for motor vehicles in this state as well. It also identifies the penalty for not complying with this law should a motorist be cited by a police officer. As 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 with law enforcement before making your purchase.

For more information and tips, visit our web site at [www.lincolncountysheriff.net](http://www.lincolncountysheriff.net) and Like us on Facebook at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office – Oregon.