



## OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1980 West Broad Street Columbus, Ohio 43223  
<http://www.dot.state.oh.us>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 19, 2003**

### **ODOT/COLUMBUS POST NEW 'FENDER BENDER' SIGNS**

**Motorists Urged to Move Minor Accidents Off the Road**

(COLUMBUS) – More than a dozen new signs are being posted across Columbus to dispel an old myth that contributes to hundreds of accidents each year. New “Fender Bender? Drive Damaged Vehicles to Shoulder” signs are being posted by the Ohio Department of Transportation and the City of Columbus to encourage motorists to move minor accidents off the road.

“Historically, motorists have been taught to wait for law enforcement before moving an accident vehicle, which they obey for fear of violating the law or jeopardizing their insurance coverage,” said ODOT Director Gordon Proctor. “In reality, there is no such legal requirement. Urban freeways are dangerous and the shoulder is a far safer place to exchange information.”

The regulatory signs have black lettering on a white background, which carry the force of law, said Officer Michael Rhett of the Columbus Division of Police. “We will ticket violators.”

The signs are part of OhioSafe Commute, a six-month pilot program funded by ODOT, which targets high-crash, congested freeways in Columbus. OhioSafe Commute places law enforcement officers and tow trucks along the busiest highways during peak hours. When crashes occur, officers and a tow truck will respond quickly to remove disabled vehicles. Minor accidents will be directed off the highway to complete crash reports. In addition, officers will be patrolling these corridors to encourage safe driving and lower speeds.

“Accidents not moved to the shoulder significantly increase the risk of an additional accident,” said Columbus Public Service Assistant Director Mary Carran Webster. “Additionally, these incidents cause congestion. An accident blocking one lane of a three-lane highway reduces capacity by 50 percent. An accident blocking two lanes reduces capacity by about 80 percent.”

Signs have been posted on:

- Eastbound I- 270 at Smokey Row Road
- Westbound I-270 at I-71 (north side of Columbus)
- Southbound I-270 at Morse Road
- Northbound I-270 between Main and Broad streets
- Northbound I-71 between Frank Road and Greenlawn Avenue
- Northbound I-71, just north of the “split” at Broad Street
- Southbound I-71 at Fifth Avenue
- Westbound I-70 near Parsons Avenue
- Eastbound I-670, west of Neil Avenue
- Westbound I-670 near Fifth Avenue
- Southbound SR 315 near Henderson Road
- Westbound U.S. Route 33 near I-270

ODOT plans to post additional signs along urban freeways statewide.

###

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Michelle May, ODOT, (614) 204-6178 or (city contact)