



Striping Season Common Questions

What is striping season?

Each year, WHATCOM COUNTY maintenance crews spend the dry summer months re-striping approximately 1300 lane miles of roadway in Whatcom County. The fresh coats of reflective paint stripe that crews apply during spring, summer and fall months will make it easier for drivers to see the road when the winter rains return.

What can drivers do to avoid the wet paint?

Drivers can protect their car from damage by keeping an eye out for striping crews and avoiding lane changes on freshly painted lines.

- Watch for “wet paint” warning signs and warning trucks, and avoid following too closely.
- Avoid crossing or driving on freshly painted lines. Do not go around cones or weave in and out of your lane of travel.

What happens when drivers drive over wet paint?

When drivers go over the wet lane stripes their tires splatter paint onto their vehicles and remove thousands of tiny glass reflector beads that are designed to be clearly visible when illuminated by headlights. The reflective lane stripe helps drivers see the road at night and in the rain.

What can I do if I get striping paint on my vehicle?

The paint we use on roadways is engineered to last, which means it is nearly impossible to remove if it dries on your car. However, because the paint is water-based, drivers may have about one hour to wash it off with a high pressure hose.

Will WHATCOM COUNTY pay for drivers to remove paint from their vehicles?

No. If a driver crosses wet paint when wet paint warning signs are present, the county will deny the reimbursement claim.

In addition, when a driver crosses the wet stripe, their tires remove the paint and thousands of reflective glass beads that help drivers see the road at night and in the rain.

How many miles will WHATCOM COUNTY stripe this year?

Between April and October, WHATCOM COUNTY maintenance crews will re-stripe more than 1300 lane miles of road. Striping is weather dependent.

How many miles will WHATCOM COUNTY paint per day?

The striping crew typically covers approximately 30 miles of lane stripes a day until returning back to the shop to re-fill supplies. Striping crews usually stripe between 6:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. daily.

How warm does it have to be to stripe?

The roadway must be dry and at least 50 degrees.

How long does the striping paint take to dry?

WHATCOM COUNTY uses fast-drying paint that takes thirty seconds to five minutes to dry, depending on weather conditions.

What makes the paint reflective?

Reflective paint is a type of paint which contains thousands of little glass beads designed to reflect a lot lots of light, even at night. It is most frequently used for striping and road signs, but is also used on license plates.

When vehicle headlights hit the paint, tiny spheres in the glass beads reflect the light, making the road brighter for drivers in dark and rainy conditions. All of the reflective beads are made from 100% recycled glass.

Driving on fresh paint will not only mess up your paint job, it's against the law.

WAC 308-330-412



Crossing new pavement and markings.

No person shall ride or drive any animal, bicycle, or vehicle, across any newly made pavement or freshly applied markings on any highway when a sign, cone marker, or other warning device is in place warning persons not to drive across such pavement or marking.

[Statutory Authority: RCW [46.90.010](#). WSR 94-01-082, § 308-330-412, filed 12/13/93, effective 7/1/94.]
