

Muffler and Speeding FAQ

What are the specific laws in Mukilteo that prohibit loud mufflers?

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 46.37.390 requires that every motor vehicle shall be equipped with a muffler in good working order and in constant operation to prevent excessive or unusual noise. Furthermore the RCW states that "No person shall modify the exhaust system of a motor vehicle in a manner that will amplify or increase the noise emitted by the engine of such vehicle above that emitted by the muffler originally installed on the vehicle."

How does this law relate to motorcycles?

Unfortunately with the way the law is written, it is only illegal if the muffler has been modified from the original manufacturer's muffler. Since many motorcycles come stock with loud exhaust systems there is no violation.

What are the penalties for violating these laws?

The state sets fines for traffic infractions which can change yearly. For 2023, the first offense fine is \$155, the second offense is \$196, and the third offense is \$237.

How often do police officers patrol for loud muffler violations?

Traffic enforcement has always been a priority for the Mukilteo Police Department. Historically during the warmer months, we see increased complaints about muffler violations and speeding vehicles near the ferry terminal. We adjust our operational staffing to address our citizens' concerns. During May, our officers conducted over 38 emphasis patrols and over 92 traffic stops in the north part of the City.

What steps do police officers take when they encounter a vehicle with a loud muffler?

The officers of Mukilteo Police Department take a balanced approach to law enforcement. The professional officers of our department start by educating the drivers on the relevant laws of Washington State and what practical steps the vehicle owner or driver can take to solve the issue. Officers can, upon their discretion, issue a warning, an infraction, or a fix-it ticket for muffler violations, which provides the vehicle owner 15 days to submit proof that they have fixed their muffler before an infraction is issued.

What can community members do to help reduce the number of loud muffler violations in Mukilteo?

Partnership with the community is vital to the success of the Police Department and City. We encourage citizens to report traffic issues and non-emergent issues to the non-emergency line at 425-407-3930 or by making an online report at www.mycrimereport.us. For any emergency, please call 911. These citizen reports help direct our patrols to where the issues are occurring.

What can be done to educate drivers about the importance of having quiet mufflers?

Most drivers are unaware of the muffler laws in Washington state. That is why we post educational information on our social media accounts along with enforcement action.

If I send you a video of a vehicle with a loud muffler, can the officer issue them a ticket?

No. A law enforcement officer in Washington State must observe the violation to issue a traffic ticket.

Has Mukilteo thought about the creation of a no-cruising zone?

Cruising ordinances may be considered potentially unconstitutional, as they interfere with the 14th Amendment's right to due process of law, including the right to travel without government interference. The cities that have successfully upheld No Cruising Ordinances had to ensure that the ordinances were not overly broad or vague.

Because of this, enforcing no cruising ordinances can be challenging, as it may be difficult to differentiate between legitimate traffic and cruising. In two neighboring jurisdictions, the No Cruising Ordinances state that a vehicle cannot be driven past the same traffic control point two times in the same direction within two hours and that on the third time, they would be guilty of a misdemeanor. However, they have several exemptions, including residents, patrons, individuals driving as part of their job, and ride-share. Basically, anybody with a legitimate purpose to be driving would be exempt. The practical implications of a "no-cruising zone" make it nearly impossible to enforce based on SR 525 and near the ferry terminal.



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Can officers work overtime shifts to address the ferry traffic that gets off first thing in the morning?

Overtime shifts are regularly created to address crime trends and quality-of-life issues throughout the year. We are fortunate to have a supportive Mayor and City Council that provides the resources needed to address issues throughout the City. Despite this, call volume and staffing levels do not always allow officers to work overtime shifts.

I called about a speeding vehicle and yet I never saw the police respond. Why not?

We take our partnership with the community very seriously and have created a culture of service within the department, and we apologize if you felt ignored. Many factors may have caused an officer to not respond. At the Police Department, we prioritize crimes against people and property, and as a small department, depending on priority calls, we do not always have an officer available to respond.

Is the Police Department taking any steps to address street racing?

The Mukilteo Police Department has always taken street racing seriously, and we will continue to aggressively enforce any reckless behavior on our roads. We constantly communicate with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies about crime trends. There has been no intelligence nor have we observed anything to suggest that organized street racing is occurring or is planned for Mukilteo.

What has the City done and what else can be done to mitigate traffic issues?

The City and Police Department take traffic safety very seriously. Collisions are down 29% over the past 5 years and we have not had a fatality collision in over a decade! This is despite Snohomish County as a whole seeing a 41% increase in fatality collisions during that same time period. While other agencies have had to cut dedicated traffic units, we have expanded our traffic unit to include a motors officer! Our increased focus on this problem, beginning in 2022, has led to more traffic stops and infractions being issued. Please see the table below.

However we are constantly looking for new and innovative ways to address issues throughout the City. The Police Department in conjunction with City Hall is exploring speed zone cameras as allowed by Washington State Law. Any implementation of speed cameras would be would only occur after appropriate studies have been conducted and City Council approved them.

	911 Traffic Calls	Radar	Traffic Stops	Traffic Infractions Issued	Criminal Traffic Issued
2019	484	321	2532	729	128
2020	446	392	1827	597	315
2021	389	594	3050	1283	287
2022	127	1827	5262	2338	383
2023*	Data not available yet	640	3039	1274	177

*As of June 1, 2023