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Top 10 List of Most Dangerous Highway Debris

Don't Trash Arizona Cautions Motorists to Secure Loads

PHOENIX (July 8, 2013) — Litter is not only ugly and unhealthy, but perhaps more importantly, it is unsafe. According to the [AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety](#), falling debris from unsecured loads is responsible for nearly 25,000 accidents each year in North America, resulting in nearly 90 fatalities annually. The Maricopa Association of Governments' (MAG) anti-littering campaign, [Don't Trash Arizona](#), conducted in partnership with the Arizona Department of Transportation, has released the list of the top ten most common types of dangerous debris found on Valley highways:

1. Tire Alligators
2. Mattresses
3. Ladders
4. Couch and Chair Cushions
5. Bed Liners
6. Appliances
7. Camper Shells
8. Carpet
9. Plastic Patio Chairs
10. Sheet Metal and Insulation

“On average, one person dies in Maricopa County from dangerous road debris each year,” said Mesa Mayor and MAG Chair Scott Smith. “Not only does roadway debris cost us in innocent lives and serious traffic accidents, it also costs us many hours of wasted time due to traffic delays. Research has found that here in the Valley, we each spend about 49 hours per year sitting in traffic, costing our region about \$1.3 billion a year in lost productivity. It is even more frustrating when those delays are caused by commuter carelessness. These accidents could be prevented if drivers would just take that extra couple of minutes to properly secure their loads,” he said.

Don't Trash Arizona offers tips for motorists to keep the roadways clear of dangerous debris:

- **Tie It Down.** Large and heavy items should be firmly secured with solid straps, rope, bungee cords, or netting. These items should be tied down directly to the vehicle and be able to withstand winds of 70 mph on the freeway. At 70 mph, that wind is providing about a 20-lbs-per-square-foot push on those loads, which can dislodge items and push them right off the vehicle.
- **Cover It Up.** For loose, lighter items such as couch cushions, appliances and patio chairs, drivers should use a sturdy plastic or canvas tarp or netting to keep items in place.
- **Don't Overload.** Keep materials level with the truck bed or trailer unless tied down, netted or covered with a tarp.
- **Properly maintain vehicle tires.** The summer heat wreaks havoc on rubber, causing it to dry out and crack. To help avoid a tire blowout, drivers should examine the tread. [AAA Arizona](#) recommends checking tire tread by placing a quarter upside down in the tread grooves on several spots of the tire. If the top of Washington's head is exposed at any point, it's time to replace that tire.

For more information on the hazards of unsecured loads, please visit DontTrashArizona.com.

Attached Photo: Damage to [this windshield](#) was caused by a flying “tire alligator” on June 26, 2013. The incident happened on Interstate 10 near Marana Road. The two ADOT employees inside the vehicle were shaken up, but not hurt.

About *Don't Trash Arizona*

Don't Trash Arizona is a joint effort between the Maricopa Association of Governments and the Arizona Department of Transportation to address the economic, safety, and health impacts of freeway litter along regional and state highways. The program is funded through Proposition 400, which was approved by voters in 2004. That funding encompasses litter pickup, sweeping, and landscape maintenance, as well as litter education and prevention. *Don't Trash Arizona* seeks to change attitudes, awareness, and most importantly, behavior, when it comes to roadway littering.

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