

2019 National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 8-12 – “Drive Like You Work Here”

Work zones play a key role in maintaining and upgrading our Nation's roadways. Unfortunately, daily changes in traffic patterns, narrowed rights-of-way, and other construction activities often create a combination of factors resulting in crashes, injuries, and fatalities. These crashes also cause excessive delays, especially given the constrained driving environment.

Each year, National Work Zone Awareness Week brings attention to these safety, mobility, and constructability issues. The key message is that, as a driver, you must use extra caution in work zones to keep yourself and others safe. In short: **Drive like you work here.**

SPEED AND SAFETY IN WORK ZONES

Speeding endangers everyone on the road, particularly in work zones. Speeding drivers are less likely to respond to traffic control devices or safely navigate the roadway conditions, lane closures, lane shifts, rough surfaces, and other conditions that are common in work zones. To stay safe, you should always slow down and proceed with caution whenever you see signs of highway work.

SAFETY TIPS FOR DRIVING IN WORK ZONES

Plan Ahead - Work zones account for an estimated 10 percent of overall congestion and nearly 24 percent of unexpected freeway delays. Expect delays, plan for them, and leave early to reach your destination on time. When you can, avoid work zones altogether by using alternate routes.

Obey Road Crews and Signs - When approaching a work zone; watch for cones, barrels, signs, large vehicles, or workers in bright-colored vests to warn you and direct you where to go.

Slow Down - Look for signs indicating the speed limit through the work zone. Keep a safe

distance from the vehicle ahead of you and follow the posted speed limit.

Move Over - Most state move-over laws apply when passing work crews and official vehicles parked on the shoulder with flashing warning lights.

Avoid Distractions - Keep your eyes on the road and off your phone.

Watch for Sudden Stoppages - In 2017 approximately 25 percent of fatal work zone crashes involved rear-end collisions.

Watch for Large Vehicles - Don't make sudden lane changes in front of trucks that are trying to slow down. In 2017 approximately 50 percent of fatal work zone crashes involving large trucks or buses occurred on rural roadways. Between 2013 and 2017, fatal work zone crashes involving large trucks increased by 43 percent.

In addition, on Wednesday, April 10, 2019, all roadway safety professionals across the country are encouraged to wear orange to proudly show their support of work zone safety. Go Orange Day and NWZAW is an important time to show your support of the roadway safety industry, especially to the families of victims who have lost their lives in work zones.

For more information of Nation Work Zone Awareness week, visit <http://www.nwzaw.org/>



Monthly Toolbox Talk

Defensive Driving and Distracted Driving

For some of us, the most dangerous thing we do every day is drive to and from work. For others, driving is simply part of the job. In order to complete these tasks safely on a daily basis we must practice defensive driving. Defensive driving is the ability to reduce the risk of accident or collision by anticipating dangerous situations, despite adverse conditions and the actions or mistakes of others. This can be achieved through adherence to a variety of general rules and incorporating a set of specific driving techniques into our everyday commute.

1. Do a quick walk around your vehicle to evaluate the condition of your vehicle prior to getting on the road.
2. Secure all loose items in your vehicle. Do not attempt to catch items sliding around in your car.
3. Always keep your eyes moving, constantly looking at your side and rear view mirrors, up, behind and to both sides of the vehicle. Maintain a visual of two to three car lengths in front of you.
4. When changing lanes, physically turn your head around to check your blind spot, followed by checking your side and rear view mirrors.
5. Look out for motorcycles, bicycles, pedestrians and smaller vehicles.
6. Leave at least two car lengths between you and the car in front of you. During inclement weather, increase this to five car lengths.
7. Always give yourself an out. Avoid remaining next to other vehicles, move ahead or drop behind them to allow yourself room for maneuvering in case something happens.
8. Stop prior to stop signs and then roll forward slightly to get a better look in each direction.
9. Always use signal lights and be sure to signal ahead of time to communicate your intentions to other drivers.
10. Avoid using a cell phone. Follow NYS Hands Free Law.
11. Follow the speed limit and pay attention at all times.

DISTRACTED DRIVING: Distracted driving is the leading factor in fatal and serious vehicle accidents. Driver distractions are anything that takes your focus away from the primary task of driving, which requires your full attention at all times. Mobile phones are among the top driver distractions. Those who talk on the phone while driving are five times more likely to have an accident, while who text are 23 times more likely to get in an accident while driving. Phones distract drivers in three ways:

Visually -Eyes off the road Mechanically -Hands of the wheel Cognitively -Mind off driving

The biggest challenge is that drivers don't understand or realize that talking or texting on a mobile device distracts the brain and takes focus away from the primary task. This cognitive distraction still exists with the use of a hands-free device, or having passenger conversations. Our brain is not able to simultaneously perform two tasks at the same time. It handles tasks sequentially and switches between one task and another.

Common distractions drivers need to be aware of and avoid include: ■ Eating, drinking or smoking ■ Leaning, reaching or adjusting vehicle controls ■ Grooming such as shaving or applying makeup ■ Reading/writing including directions ■ Driver fatigue ■ Driving when emotional -upset, angry, or stressed ■ Weather conditions ■ Outside distractions, including advertising, movies in other vehicles, wildlife, people and other accidents

