

Work Zone Safety Awareness Fact Sheet

- As states and the federal government focus on rebuilding and refurbishing the highway system in the post-interstate era, increased work zones mean more risk of crashes and deaths (approximately 600 people die nationally in work zones each year).
- The most common type of car crash is the rear-end collision, so leave plenty of space between you and the car in front of you (the 3 – 4 second following distance rule would be best).

REGULATIONS

Work area is defined in the Vehicle and Traffic Law (Section 160) as “That part of the highway being used or occupied for the conduct of highway work, within which workers, vehicles, equipment, materials, supplies, excavations or other obstructions are present.”

A **flagger** has the same authority as a regulatory sign.

Enforcement of traffic laws is maintained 24 hours a day. Traffic enforcement is enhanced because of all the potential risks and dangers.

REDUCE SPEED

- Speeding ticket fines are doubled.
- Speed limits are enforced even when no work is underway.
- A mandatory 60-day license suspension when an individual is convicted of two or more speeding violations in posted highway construction or highway maintenance work area.
- The establishment of a highway construction and maintenance safety education program funded by a new \$50 surcharge for speeding violations occurring in work zones.

STRATEGIES

- **Stay calm** and expect the unexpected.
- **Slow down** as soon as diamond-shaped orange warning signs tell you and keep speed down until you have passed the sign that states end of the work zone.
- **Merge as soon as possible** before signs when you see flashing arrow panels or “lane closed ahead” signs. Drivers slow to reduce speed and/or merging react at the last possible moment.
- **Leave space** for slow moving construction vehicles, such as mobile line painting or pothole crews.
- **Plan an alternate route** if you already know of a work zone.
- **Be attentive**, since large construction or maintenance vehicles along the roadside could obstruct your vision.

HAZARDS

- Lack of shoulder and/or median areas that usually serve as safety valve areas.
- Lane merges or changing patterns.
- Barrels and cones reducing lane width.
- Drivers not using common sense.
- Highway workers standing and working near traffic.
- Aggressive drivers disregarding restrictions.