



Work Zone Safety

April 2025

Today kicks off the 2025 National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW). In 2022, the last year for which statistics are available, 891 people died in work zones, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. In that same year, 94 highway worker occupational fatalities occurred in road construction sites, based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Both commercial motor vehicle (CMV) and passenger vehicle drivers need to be extra careful while traveling through work zones. CMV involvement in non-work zone fatal crashes have consistently involved 10-13% of all fatal crashes over time. But when it comes to work zones, CMVs are involved in more than 30% of fatal work zone crashes on urban interstates and more than 50% percent on rural interstates. CMV involvement is also higher than overall trends in fatal work zone crashes on other roadway types.

With road repairs, maintenance and construction now in full swing, the following are some tips to travel safely through work zones.

- **Research Your Route:** Before setting out on the road, research your route. When possible, avoid work zones and use any available detours.
- **Pay Attention:** You should always keep your eyes on the road, but this is exceptionally important in work zones. Be aware of all signage throughout work zones indicating reduced speeds, lane changes and other important information. Avoid distractions such as your phone, eating, drinking, the radio, GPS or conversing with other passengers.
- **Follow the signs.** Signs and flaggers will direct you through work zones. Expect changes in traffic patterns as a project progresses.
- **Watch Your Mirrors:** Impatient passenger car drivers often see your vehicle as a ticket for entry at the head of a long line of traffic and will speed up on either side to “cut in the line” and avoid waiting in long lines.
- **Slow Down:** Lane closures, traffic pattern shifts and reduced speeds are common in work zones. Make sure to slow down when entering a work zone and keep an eye out for road workers.
- **Move into the Open Lane:** When approaching lane closures, move into the open lane as soon as possible. Be sure to pay close attention to vehicles around you that could be in your blind spot.
- **Keep Your Distance:** Rear-end crashes are extremely common in work zones. Always maintain extra space between your vehicle and the one in front of you.
- **Avoid distractions.** Focus on driving safely through the work zone and avoid distractions such as phones. Expect narrow lanes, variable speed limits, and unexpected lane shifts. Watch out for workers and slow-moving equipment
- **Be patient.** Crews are working to improve the safety and comfort of your travels.

*The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and **Centerline Drivers**, is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at tmoore@nptc.org or (703)838-8898.*