

# DRIVER SAFETY LETTER



## Work Zone Safety

April 2026

This month, we recognize National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW). Each year, over 100,000 work zone crashes kill more than 900 people and injure 39,000. Work zones present extra road safety challenges, especially for large vehicles. Narrow lanes, sudden stops, shifting patterns and uneven surfaces require added caution.

Commercial motor vehicles (CMV) are overrepresented in work zone crashes, accounting for nearly one-third of fatal crashes in these high-risk areas. That's why you need to be extra careful while traveling through work zones. CMV involvement in non-work zone fatal crashes has 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 the overall trends in fatal work zone crashes on other roadway types.

As a professional driver, you know how to anticipate risks others may miss. Stay alert in work zones—use GPS tools to identify upcoming areas, plan your route ahead of time, and take detours when needed to help keep everyone safe. With road repairs, maintenance, and construction now in full swing, here are some tips for traveling safely through work zones.

- **Research Your Route:** Before starting your trip, review your route. When possible, avoid work zones and take 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 the project progresses.
- **Watch Your Mirrors:** Impatient passenger car drivers often see your vehicle as a ticket to the head of a long line of traffic and will speed up on either side to “cut in line” and avoid waiting.
- **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.