



April 20-24, 2020

FACTS ABOUT WORK ZONE SAFETY

Georgia DOT and Work Zone Safety

- Since 1973, 60 Georgia DOT employees have died in work zone related incidents.
- Fatal work zone crashes are on the rise in Georgia with a steady increase from 23 fatalities in 2014 to 55 fatalities in 2017.
- In 2017, there were 20,834 total crashes in Georgia work zones, resulting in 7,276 injuries and 55 fatalities.
- Motorists or passengers make up 78% of work zone fatalities in Georgia.
- The top causes for fatal work zone crashes were roadway departure and rear end collisions. Both are often associated with distraction, driving too fast for conditions and driver impairment (under the influence or fatigued).
- Truck-involved and pedestrian-involved fatalities are also on the rise. The total includes 18 fatalities involving trucks and 12 pedestrian-involved fatalities.

Background

- **National Work Zone Awareness Week** (NWZAW) is an annual spring campaign sponsored by federal, state and local transportation officials to raise the public consciousness about the need for driving safely in work zones. The campaign draws attention to the safety needs of road workers, as well as motorists. NWZAW is held at the start of the highway construction season across most of the country.
- National Work Zone Awareness Week, which began in 1999, is designed to inform motorists about the dangers of driving through work zones and of the perils faced by construction and maintenance workers.
- According to the Federal Highway Administration, nationally in 2015 (the most recent year for which data is available):
 - Work zone crashes increased 42% from 2013 to 2015;
 - 35,536 injuries occurred in work zones;
 - 700 work zone fatalities occurred (up 10 percent from 2014);
 - 35,526 work zone injuries occurred (a 9 percent increase from 2014);
 - 130 worker fatalities occurred (a 9 percent increase from 2014); and
 - There were 177 fatal crashes involving large trucks and buses in work zones
- **Work Zone Safety: Everybody's Responsibility**, the 2019 national theme for work zone awareness week promotes federal, state and local agencies, organizations, companies and individuals to work together and take responsibility for keeping our roadway workers and those traveling safe in work zones.

11 Tips for Driving in Work Zones

- **Obey the Rules of Work Zone:** (1) Pay attention (2) Slow down (3) Watch for workers
- **Expect the Unexpected.** Things may change quickly. Normal speed limits may be reduced, traffic lanes may be closed, narrowed, or shifted, and people may be working on or near the road.
- **Don't Speed.** Obey the posted speed limit, even when workers are not present. In 2016, there were 190 work zone fatal crashes where speeding was a factor.
- **Don't Tailgate.** Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you and the construction workers and their equipment.
- **Obey Road Crew Flaggers and Pay Attention to Signs.** Failure to obey speed limit signs or a flagger's traffic control directions can result in hefty fines and/or imprisonment.
- **Stay Alert and Minimize Distractions.** Give your full attention to the roadway and avoid changing radio stations or using cell phones and other electronic devices while approaching and driving in a work zone.
- **Keep Up with the Traffic Flow.** Do not slow down to gawk at road work.
- **Know Before You Go.** Expect delays, leave early and schedule enough time to drive safely. For 24/7 real-time traffic information call 511 or visit www.511ga.org (do not do this when driving!). And follow Georgia DOT on Twitter for additional updates.
- **Be Patient and Stay Calm.** Work zone crews are working to improve the road and make your future drive better.
- **Wear Your Seatbelt.** It is your best defense in a crash. And make sure your passengers are buckled up.
- **Remember** - Dads, Moms, Sons, Daughters, Brothers, and Sisters Work HERE!

Work Zone Safety and Georgia Driving Laws

- **Distracted driving** From cell phones and iPods to fast-food snacks and driver drowsiness, there are more than enough distractions to keep Georgia motorists from focusing on our roads. And now new national data is showing driver inattention is a key cause in most crashes and near-crashes. Georgia's Hands-Free Law took effect July 2018 (<https://www.gahighwaysafety.org/highway-safety/hands-free-law/>) and states drivers cannot have a phone in their hand or touching any part of their body while talking on their phone when driving.
- **Georgia's Move-Over Law** says motorists traveling in the lane adjacent to the shoulder must move-over one lane when emergency and utility vehicles are stopped on the side of the highway and operating in an official capacity. Vehicles included in the law include all first responders (law enforcement, fire, EMS), utility vehicles, DOT vehicles, HERO Units and wreckers tending to an accident. The law is meant to keep officers AND traffic violators safe from crashes with passing cars. The Move Over Law fine in Georgia can be up to \$500.
- To view and share GDOT's 30-second work zone safety video and for additional information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation/Workzone.