



# Weekly Safety Meeting

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## Highway Work Zones

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, workers struck by vehicles or mobile equipment and transportation incidents account for the highest number of on-the-job fatalities (per the National Safety Council). The BLS reported that in 2022, there were around 96,000 work zone crashes, resulting in around 37,000 injuries and 891 fatalities. Those numbers increase every year, as more and more road workers and motorists are injured or killed.

### How to Identify a Work Zone

A work zone is an area on or near a roadway where work is taking place. Types of work include tree trimming, mowing, road work/repairs, excavating, trenching, paving, or construction along or near a road. Highway work zones may make use of lane closures, barrels, barriers, cones, signs with arrows, detours, and human “flaggers” to control traffic flow around the work zone. Types of markers (smaller than cones) that direct drivers, but don’t prevent injury include channelizers, tubular markers, and portable delineators.

### Workers in Work Zones

There are many types of workers that might find themselves in a high-traffic work zone. These workers may be along busy highways, on the shoulder, in the medians, or operating vehicles or equipment. Clean-up crews that are picking up trash or accident debris, utility workers that are installing or repairing lights or cables, and construction worker in these zones are at-risk to be struck by moving vehicles. State troopers, fire crews, EMS workers (first responders) are also grouped into this category because they respond to collisions or pull over vehicles on busy roads and interstates.

### Hazards of Road Work

Crews may work very close to multiple hazards including vehicles, heavy machinery, hot asphalt, tight spaces and power lines. Road debris and dust are also work hazards, as cars or trucks can kick up objects from the road or objects can fall from a passing truck. Darkness adds additional risk of being hit by an oncoming vehicle, but sometimes it is preferable to perform needed roadwork at night, when visibility is low but there is less moving traffic.

### Staying Safe

Traffic work zone crews should have a traffic control plan and do everything within their power to be aware of the traffic flow and not get in the travel path of vehicles. They should wear fluorescent orange-red or yellow-green (hi-vis) reflective vests both day and night. Workers should remember to

walk facing traffic. They should also be aware of where the pinch points of the traffic control plan are in the work zone and be very cautious around those areas.

## Work Zone Protection

Positive protection refers to a physical barrier that contains or redirect moving traffic from workers. These types of physical barriers include movable concrete, water, sand, and steel barriers, shadow vehicles with energy-absorbing attenuators, vehicle arresting systems, and crash cushions. These benefit both workers and motorists by keeping them from being involved in a work zone collision.

## Traffic Work Zone Safety

Work zones are very dangerous areas. Not only have motorists become more inattentive and distracted, but the type of work being performed on bridges, roads, and by-ways often involves many kinds of hazards. Contractors for projects should make sure their crews have a traffic control plan, that they use signs to assist workers and motorists alike, and use traffic control devices to slow and direct vehicles. Protections should be used whenever possible, and workers should always remain alert to and face oncoming traffic. Flaggers should be used where needed and the flagger stations and work areas should be properly illuminated at night.

***PUT ON THE BRAKES...KEEP WORK ZONES SAFE!***

## Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests