

Use caution when driving through construction zones.

During late spring and summer, many areas of the U.S. experience an increased amount of construction and repair work on roadways. Additionally, the amount of travel increases during this time of year. These two factors contribute to increased crashes in work zones. Reasons for the increase include driver impatience due to congestion and delays, construction equipment merging on and off the roadway, lane closures and diversions, and drivers taking their eyes off the forward roadway to observe construction activity.

Did you know?¹

- Approximately 700 people die in work zone crashes each year.
- Four of five people killed in work zone crashes are motorists, not highway workers.
- Large trucks are involved in fewer crashes within work zones than passenger cars, but their involvement rate in fatal accidents is almost twice that of passenger cars.
- 75% of work zone crashes occur during daylight.
- 42% of work zone crashes involve one vehicle rear-ending another vehicle.
- Inattentive driving and following too closely are the most frequent contributing factors in fatal work zone crashes.

Citations and fines

- Thirty-six states double the fine for speeding (or committing other traffic violations) in a work zone.² All but one state has enhanced penalties.
- Some states have higher penalties for second offenses in work zones. For example, in Illinois the penalty for a second offense is \$1,000.



- Being issued a citation for following a vehicle too closely while operating a commercial motor vehicle is considered a “serious traffic violation.” Two serious traffic violations within a three-year period will result in disqualification of a CDL for 60 days.

Drive safely

Driving in construction zones creates additional challenges for a professional truck driver. There are several things you can do to increase the potential for navigating a construction zone safely.

- **Plan ahead and look for alternative routes.** This website provides access to national road closure information: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/>.
- **Look for information signs.** Look for warnings of detours, lane closures, uneven pavements, and flaggers, etc.

¹ Identification of Work Zone Crash Characteristics, Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative, Iowa State University, September 2009.

² Governors Highway Safety Association, Work Zone Traffic Laws, January 2019, http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/workzone_laws.html.

- **Reduce speed and increase following distance.** This will provide additional time to see a potential hazard and react. Remember, 42% of work zone crashes are rear-ends.
- **Turn off cruise control.** Doing so allows for better control of the vehicle.
- **Merge into the correct lane well ahead of any lane closures.** Do not wait until traffic backs up.
- **Use extra caution around construction vehicles.** They may slow down or change lanes quickly. Be cautious to not follow a construction vehicle off the dedicated roadway.
- **Don't change lanes in a construction zone.** Changing lanes creates additional hazards in an already hazardous environment.
- **Avoid distractions.** Keep your eyes on the road at all times. Do not use the CB radio, change radio stations, reach for an object in the cab, read, make phone calls, etc.
- **Always expect the unexpected.** Other drivers confused by lane diversions, construction equipment operating near the lane of travel, and trucks and equipment moving on and off the roadway are some of the hazards in construction zones.
- **Be patient.** Remember, the construction zone crews are there to improve the highway for you.



Slow down and increase your following distance. Remember, 42% of work zone crashes involve one vehicle rear-ending another vehicle.



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