

TOOL BOX TALKS

Work Zone Safety

General Safety

Roadside work activities are inherently dangerous with and without traffic. Highway crash statistics reveal that many motorists are usually driving distracted, traveling too fast for conditions, or tailgating other vehicles. Safe work zones require employee training, proper setup and signage, advanced warning and situational awareness.

Tool Box Tips

Roadway Work Zone Hazards

- Distracted drivers
- Intoxicated drivers with poor reaction times
- Fatigued drivers
- High-speed traffic areas
- Machine, exhaust and vehicle noise
- Poor lane identification and visibility
- Vehicle speeds over 40 MPH
- Poor weather, extreme cold or heat

Required Personal Protective Equipment

- High visibility workwear
- Hard hat
- Protective footwear
- Eye protection
- Respiratory protection from masonry dusts
- Hearing protection

The Driver's Perspective

- No advanced signage or warning
- Traffic lane confusion
- Confusing flagger signals
- Workers are difficult to see
- Frustration due to time of day
- Start and stop traffic
- Limited driver visibility
- Sudden or loud noises
- Unclear lane marking
- Vision obscured by dust from roadside work

Best Practices

- Do not assume drivers will see workers and yield properly.
- Follow your company safety rules.
- Plan the work well—get in, get done, get out.
- Limit the amount of employees that are exposed to traffic hazards.
- Remove nonessential machines, supplies and equipment from the work zone.
- Use cones and warning signs that are in good shape and still retain their reflectivity.
- Wear high-visibility workwear—day or night.
- Protect boom lifts, bucket trucks, trackhoes and cranes from work zone crash. Use other vehicles to protect these machines, and the employee in the bucket.
- Wear seat belts whenever using excavators or roll-over protective structure equipped machines on the job site.
- Use plenty of lighting during night work, but do not blind passing traffic.
- Test machine/truck horns, backup alarms and warning/flood lights.
- Require work zone flagger training.

Additional Resources

- Federal Highway Administration
<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/>
- OSHA
<https://www.osha.gov/>

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