

Dept. of Transportation: Work Zone Awareness Week promotes highway safety

Posted on Thursday, Apr 5, 2018

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Contact: Office of Public Affairs opa.exec@dot.wi.gov

Governor Scott Walker proclaimed April 9 to 13 as Work Zone Awareness Week as part of efforts to prevent traffic crashes, deaths and injuries in construction and maintenance areas along Wisconsin's roadways.

Drivers are asked to stay alert in work areas, which include major highway construction and rolling maintenance operations as well as emergency response, municipal projects and utility work along local roads. Wisconsin's efforts are in coordination with National Work Zone Awareness Week. This year's theme is "Work Zone Safety: Everybody's Responsibility."

"Everyone has the opportunity to set the right example for safety by slowing down, eliminating distractions and being especially cautious driving in areas where workers are present," said WisDOT Secretary Dave Ross. "Whether we're working or driving in a work zone, everyone wants to make it home safe at night. Let's work together to be safe on the roads."

In 2017, Wisconsin recorded 2,763 crashes in work zones, including 1,067 injuries and six fatalities. The previous year, 2,811 crashes claimed nine lives and caused 1,112 injuries.

"Tragedies can happen in the blink of an eye," said Ross. "Even at the reduced speed of 55 mph, your car will cover the length of a football field in less than four

seconds. It's important to stay focused and avoid tailgating, giving your undivided attention to the road.”

Along with safety messages on Dynamic Message Signs, other work zone technologies include Temporary Portable Rumble Strips used by county maintenance workers and private contractors and Queue Warning Systems, which help to communicate speed reductions and other valuable traffic information ahead of work zones.

Throughout the week, and continuing into the 2018 construction season, WisDOT will periodically display messages on its electronic signs on highways and will use social media to remind drivers to slow down and pay attention on all Wisconsin highways, especially work zones.

(Visit facebook.com/WisDOT, twitter.com/WisconsinDOT, youtube.com/user/wisdot). Television and radio messages about work zone safety will be broadcast statewide.

In addition, officers from the Wisconsin State Patrol and other law enforcement agencies will be deployed in work zones to enforce speed limits and other traffic laws.

How can people help?

- Drive safely, avoid distractions and obey posted speed limits. Be courteous and patient. Set a good example for others on the road.
- Show support for work zone safety with the social media hashtags #NWZAW, #WorkZoneSafety, or #OrangeForSafety (but please never tweet and drive).
- Participate in “Go Orange Day” on Wednesday, April 11 by wearing orange in support of safety. (#OrangeForSafety)
- Visit wisconsindot.gov and search “work zone” for more tips and information.

What's coming up?

Please contact opa.exec@dot.wi.gov or the contacts listed below for information about any of the following upcoming events. More details will follow closer to the events themselves.

- **Monday, April 9, 1 p.m., Verona Road Project, Madison** – WisDOT news briefing and Work Zone Awareness Week kickoff at the Verona Road Project.

Contact Steve Theisen: Steven.Theisen@dot.wi.gov

- **Tuesday, April 10, 11 a.m., Eau Claire** – News briefing and safety message at the Dunn County I-94 improvements. Contact Diana Maas: Diana.Maas@dot.wi.gov
- **Tuesday, April 10, 2 p.m., Wausau** – News Briefing and safety message in partnership with the Marathon County Highway Department. Contact Kristin McHugh: Kristin.McHugh@dot.wi.gov
- **Wednesday, April 11, statewide** – “Go Orange Day.” Show support by wearing orange and using #OrangeForSafety in social media. (Turn off or set aside cell phones while driving).
- **Thursday, April 12, 11:30 a.m., WIS 10/441 Project, Neenah** – News briefing and more information about the innovative Queue Warning System to alert motorists of slow speeds or backups approaching a work zone. Contact Mark Kantola: Mark.Kantola@dot.wi.gov
- **Friday, April 13, 1:30 p.m., Zoo Interchange Project, Milwaukee** – News briefing focusing on safety in the final months of the project. Contact Mike Pyritz: Michael.Pyritz@dot.wi.gov