

Dept. of Transportation: Merging technology and safety in Wisconsin: the new work zone

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Envision a work zone in Wisconsin and you'll likely picture orange barrels, heavy equipment and workers in hard hats. Technology may not come to mind, but it is playing an increasingly important role in keeping motorists and workers safe. In the latest episode of [Transportation Connects Us](#), the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) podcast, WisDOT engineers discuss the safety benefits of work zone technology, including:

- Queue Warning Systems
- Dynamic Late Merge System (zipper merge)
- Modern work zone inspection equipment
- Engineers also clarify common work zone driving questions and misconceptions

Statewide work zone operations engineer Erin Schwark explains why the state employs the Dynamic Late Merge System (zipper merge) in many work zones with lane closures and heavy congestion.

"I think we've all driven in work zones where you see the sign ahead that the left lane is closing and everyone merges to the right, and then you have cars flying by you in that adjacent lane. We're trying to reduce those speeds, those erratic maneuvers, and basically telling people that you can use both lanes up to that merge," said Schwark.

Statewide work zone engineer Mike Seifert talks about the cameras and digital technology inspectors use to help keep work zones operating similarly across

Wisconsin.

“We want to make sure that the work zones are consistent throughout the state. So that way, if a driver were to drive in a work zone in one part of the state and then they drive through a work zone in a different part of the state, they’re going to know what to expect,” said Seifert.

The podcast ends with the engineers answering common work zone safety questions that every driver should know, like “Why do you close off a long stretch of roadway, when work is only being done in a short section?” You’ll have to listen to the podcast for the answer.

[Transportation Connect Us](#) is a podcast series produced by WisDOT which focuses on transportation safety, engineering, transportation investments and DMV topics. Download or subscribe wherever you find your podcasts.