

WisDOT: Work Zone Awareness Week promotes highway safety

Posted on Thursday, Apr 7, 2022

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Gov. Tony Evers has proclaimed next week (April 11-15) as National Work Zone Awareness Week in Wisconsin. Since 2000, National Work Zone Awareness Week has marked the start of construction season across our country, promoting road worker safety and cautious driving in work zones.

“No matter where you go in Wisconsin, folks can all agree that we need to provide and support high-quality roads, highways and bridges,” Gov. Evers said. “The state of Wisconsin joins road workers throughout Wisconsin and the United States in advocating for safe driving in work zones. The people doing these important improvements are counting on us to make smart decisions behind the wheel and to keep them safe.”

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) reminds drivers of the importance of safe driving in work zones as the 2022 construction season gets underway.

Cell phone use is one of the most common factors in distracted driving crashes. Wisconsin law prohibits texting while driving on any road. It is also illegal to use a hand-held mobile device in work zones. A [new state law](#) signed by Gov. Evers in December 2021 expands this ban to areas surrounding emergency response vehicles with flashing lights.

“Every year there are typically more than 300 state highway and bridge improvement projects in Wisconsin,” WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson said. “The women and men in work zones all across the state have the right to a safe work environment. Wisconsinites and visitors are in the driver’s seat to make a difference. We ask all drivers to stay alert and avoid distractions to keep our

highway workers and emergency responders safe.”

In Wisconsin, work zones include highway construction and rolling maintenance operations as well as emergency response, municipal projects and utility work along local roads.

- Between April 2021 and November 2021, there were more than eight work zone crashes daily statewide, or one crash every three hours.
- From 2017 to 2021, Wisconsin work zones have seen 12,441 crashes causing 62 deaths and 4,780 injuries.
- The majority of crash victims are drivers and passengers with speed, tailgating and distracted driving as common factors.
- [Download the 2022 Wisconsin work zone safety fact sheet.](#)

“Protecting our construction workers requires a commitment from every driver,” Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent Anthony Burrell said. “Don’t let distractions get in the way of your most important task. Buckle up and put your phone down to keep everyone safe on the roads.”

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.
- Leave the phone alone. Texting and driving is illegal statewide and talking on a hand-held mobile device is illegal in work zones.
- Slow down when you see workers and, if possible, provide additional space by moving over. Wisconsin’s Move Over Law applies to maintenance operations as well as emergency response units.
- Take the Buckle Up, Phone Down pledge at wisconsindot.gov/BUPD and share your commitment with others. Participants are encouraged to share a thumbs up/thumbs down photo on social media using the hashtag #BuckleUpPhoneDown then challenge friends, family and coworkers to do the same.
- Show support for work zone safety with the social media hashtags #DriveLikeYouWorkHere, #NWZAW, #WorkZoneSafety, or #Orange4Safety (but please never text or tweet and drive).
- Participate in “Go Orange Day” on Wednesday, April 13 by wearing orange in support of highway safety. (Tag it on social media with #Orange4Safety and #GoOrangeDay.)

- New this year, there will be a nationwide moment of silence on Friday, April 15 for people killed in work zone incidents.
- Visit wisconsindot.gov and search “work zone” for more tips and information.