

Driver Safety Letter

presented by



Work Zone Safety

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During the past five years, more than 4,400 persons died (85 percent of which was the driver or passenger) and more than 200,000 persons were injured in work zone crashes. Fatal work zone crashes occur most often in summer and fall. Rear-end crashes (running into the rear of a slowing or stopping vehicle) are the most common type of work zone crash. The majority of fatal work zone crashes occurred on roads with speed limits greater than 50 mph.

Driver-related factors that affect work zone crashes include speeding, in-vehicle distractions and inattentive or aggressive driving. The most frequently occurring type of work zone crash is a rear-end collision, so paying constant attention to traffic ahead and maintaining an adequate following distance is important in avoiding them. Cell phone use increases the rate of rear-end collisions, decreases brake time by 18%, and causes a 25% increase in erratic driving. In 2014, distracted driving was a factor in 16% of fatal crashes in work zones, while speeding was a factor in 29%.

Work zones are dynamic places that can change from minute to minute. The presence of trucks (including construction vehicles), flaggers and queues, combined with reduced speed limits create an environment where being alert is critical. When motorists are alert, obey traffic control devices such as signs and pavement markings, maintain the posted speed limit and pay attention to traffic patterns, everyone's safety is enhanced.

To avoid becoming a statistic, remember these driving tips when entering a work zone.

- **Stay Alert and Minimize Distractions**
 - Dedicate your full attention to the roadway
 - Avoid changing the radio station, using a mobile phone, eating, or other distractions that can remove your concentration from the road
- **Keep Your Headlights On**
- **Pay Attention to the Road**
 - "Listen to the signs"
 - Watch brake lights on vehicles ahead
 - Watch traffic around you and be prepared to react
- **Merge into the Proper Lane**
 - Merge well before you reach the lane closure
 - Be aware that traffic patterns can change daily
- **Don't tailgate**
 - Follow other vehicles at a safe distance
- **Obey the Posted Speed Limit**
 - Workers may be present just feet away
 - Fines may be doubled for moving traffic violations
 - Be prepared to slow down further if conditions indicate the need
- **Change Lanes Safely**
 - Change lanes only where pavement markings indicate, and only when traffic conditions permit
- **Follow Instructions from Flaggers**
- **Expect the Unexpected**
 - Workers, work vehicles, or equipment may enter your lane without warning
 - Other vehicles may slow, stop, or change lanes unexpectedly
- **Be Patient**

The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and [CPC Logistics, Inc.](#), is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at tmoore@nptc.org or (703)838-8898.