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## Drive Safe. Work Safe. Save Lives.

You're driving home from work when you see a construction zone ahead and immediately think "this is going to slow me down."

Perfect, according to transportation officials, because that's what you should expect.

April 26-30 is National Work Zone Awareness Week, calling attention to the many people who have died in work zone accidents and raising awareness that the roadway construction season has begun.

The message is simple. Slowing down through work zones not only saves lives, but it's the law.

Surrounded by first-responder vehicles and equipment, Lieutenant Colonel Scott Price, deputy commissioner of operations for the Pennsylvania State Police, kicked off Work Zone Awareness Week by acknowledging the dangers faced by first responders while providing roadside assistance. Pennsylvania's theme this year is "Drive Safe. Work Safe. Save Lives."

"In addition to today being the beginning of Work Zone Awareness week, changes made to Pennsylvania's [Move Over](#) Law go into effect tomorrow," Lieutenant Colonel Price explained Monday. "Last year, 55 state police vehicles were struck while troopers were responding to traffic stops, disabled motorists, or crash scenes. The goal of the Move Over Law is to prevent these dangerous situations."

Pennsylvania's [Move Over Law](#) requires drivers to change lanes when approaching an emergency response area. Updates to the law, which include a new point system for violators and sets a fine of \$500 for first-time offenders, \$1,000 for a second offense, and \$2,000 plus 90-day license suspension for a third or subsequent offense, took effect April 27. The revamped Move Over Law also mandates drivers change lanes or slow down when approaching disabled vehicles when at least two emergency displays, such as vehicle hazard lamps, road flares, and/or cones or caution signs are present.

In 2019, there were 1,754 total crashes in work zones on all Pennsylvania roadways, resulting in 1,074 injuries and 16 deaths.

Every April since 2000, the Federal Highway Administration and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation have commemorated the week by raising awareness to the dangers of speeding through work zones. With workers near the travel lane, and traffic often slowed or stopped, it's more important than ever for motorists to slow down and avoid distraction. Distracted driving is on the rise and is now blamed for more than 3,000 traffic deaths a year, according to the National Highway Safety Administration.

Not only does speed make an accident more likely, but the chance of a death increases dramatically. A person hit at 40 mph has an 80% chance of dying, but that chance drops below 10% if the car is only traveling 25 mph.

And now it can be a lot more expensive. State legislators in 2018 passed a law allowing automated speed enforcement in work zones along federal highways. It was piloted on the Pennsylvania Turnpike and last summer was moved into other work zones across the state. A detection system records a vehicle speeding more than 11 miles above the work zone limit, takes a photo of the license plate and then sends a citation in the mail. A first offense brings a warning, a second generates a \$75 fine and every subsequent offense will cost the motorist \$150.

In 2020, the program issued 219,231 violations.

“Construction season too often means hazards for the men and women who are delivering improved roads and bridges,” said PennDOT Acting Executive Deputy Secretary Melissa Batula. “Work zones may be a temporary inconvenience, but these workers all deserve to get home safely. Please slow down and never drive distracted, especially in work zones where roadway conditions can change every day.”