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‘Safe Actions Save Lives’

Work Zone Awareness Week kicks off start of construction season

SPRINGFIELD – With construction across the state in bloom this spring, the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police, Illinois Tollway, industry partners, labor, local agencies and frontline construction workers today teamed up for National Work Zone Awareness Week to remind the public that “Safe Actions Save Lives.”

“At IDOT, we are doing more than ever this year to fix and modernize roads and bridges. Please remember to remain alert for work zones, slow down and give our crews plenty of room to do their jobs,” **said Illinois Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi.** “The people wearing the vests behind the cones and barricades want to get home at the end of the day, just like you.”

To call attention to the heightened risks of work zones, Gov. JB Pritzker has proclaimed April 20-24 as “Work Zone Safety Awareness Week” in Illinois.

The theme for this year’s National Work Zone Awareness Week is “Safe Actions Save Lives,” reinforcing the message that staying alert and anticipating changing conditions impact everyone in work zones – not just workers, but drivers and their passengers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

At all times during construction season, the public should be ready for lane closures, reduced speed limits and the presence of workers and equipment. When you are behind the wheel and approach a work zone, eliminate all distractions, decrease your speed, adjust to new traffic patterns and proceed with care and consideration for others.

“Safety is a shared responsibility when driving through road construction work zones,” **said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly.** “Already in the first three months of 2026, ISP alone has handled 640 crashes in work zones, 91 of which resulted in injuries. It’s simple: Slow down and pay attention when driving through work zones to keep road workers, you and other drivers safe.”

This year, IDOT and its partners are strengthening efforts to make work zones safer. A new initiative starting this week is a data feed to connect with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s [Work Zone Data Exchange](#), allowing providers such as Google, Apple and Waze to more easily share information on work zone activities with the public via mapping apps. The partnership also will capture short-term maintenance activities happening in the field, such as pavement patching and sign repairs.

Other measures to help curb speeds and increase awareness include expanding the use of [photo enforcement vans](#), coordinating with ISP to assign additional troopers to patrol near construction activities and deploying more temporary rumble strips approaching projects.

Each year, an average of 6,195 crashes occur in Illinois work zones, resulting in 1,073 injuries. Preliminary statistics for 2025 show that 35 people – but no workers – died in work zones in Illinois, an increase of 22 from the previous year and a reminder that crashes in work zones generally have a much greater impact on drivers and their passengers.

“At the Illinois Tollway, safety is at the core of everything we do, especially as construction season gets underway,” said **Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassandra Rouse**. “Slowing down, staying alert and avoiding distractions in work zones protects everyone on the road. When we each take responsibility, we help ensure everyone gets home safely.”

The following guidelines for traveling through work zones should be followed at all times:

- Buckle up, phone down. A seat belt is your best defense in a crash. Phones and electronic devices should be put down at all times.
- Obey the signs. They will help you safely navigate work zones and avoid delays.
- Slow down. The posted speed limits are there for the safety of workers and you.
- Look out for slowed or stopped traffic.
- Give yourself time to react. Avoid following too closely and maintain at least two seconds of space in front of you.
- Consider the limitations of heavy equipment, trucks and commercial vehicles. Provide them extra distance to come to a complete stop if they are behind you.
- Remember that a work zone can take many forms: A crew patching potholes, fixing signs and guardrail or collecting litter. A major interstate reconstruction. A minor repair on a neighborhood street or a utility company out in the field. If you see orange, slow down and save lives.

Once again, IDOT is partnering with communities and businesses across the state to light buildings and bridges orange to commemorate the week. They include: Peoria’s Murray Baker Bridge, the Interstate 74 bridge over the Mississippi River in the Quad Cities and Rockford’s Morgan Street Bridge. On Friday, IDOT is collaborating with the Laborers’ International Union of North America to distribute informational material at many of the state’s rest areas on how to keep you and your family safe while traveling through work zones.

Work zone safety is another element of IDOT’s comprehensive multimedia campaign, “It’s Not a Game,” highlighting the fact that there are no extra lives, no respawns and no second chances to get it right with safety on the roads. Visit itsnotagameillinois.com for more information.

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