



**State of Illinois**  
JB Pritzker • Governor  
**Illinois Department of Transportation**  
Gia Biagi • Acting Secretary  
**Illinois State Police**  
Brendan F. Kelly • Director  
**Illinois Tollway**  
Cassandra Rouse • Executive Director



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## **“Respect the zone so we all get home”**

*Work Zone Awareness Week kicks off start of construction season*

**SPRINGFIELD** – With construction ramping up across the state, the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police, Illinois Tollway, industry partners, local agencies and frontline construction workers today teamed up for National Work Zone Awareness Week to remind the public to “Respect the zone so we all get home.”

“Whatever the mode of transportation, we will all be traveling through work zones over the upcoming weeks and months,” **said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi.** “The people you see working on our roads, on equipment, or behind the cones and barricades are someone’s loved one, a friend, a neighbor, part of our community. Working together, we can ensure their safety and yours. Let’s make this the safest construction season ever in Illinois.”

The theme for this year’s National Work Zone Awareness Week is “Respect the zone so we all get home,” reinforcing the message that your undivided attention and caution is necessary at all times when traveling through work zones to protect everyone in them – workers, drivers and their passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. When you are behind the wheel and approach a work zone, eliminate all distractions, decrease your speed and proceed with care and consideration for others.

To call attention to the heightened risks of work zones, Gov. JB Pritzker has proclaimed April 21-25 as “Work Zone Safety Awareness Week” in Illinois. This week, IDOT is once again holding “tailgate talks” at the start of the day to give workers refreshers on work zone protocol.

At all times during construction season, the public should be ready for lane closures, changes in traffic patterns, reduced speed limits and the presence of workers and equipment. This year, IDOT is strengthening its effort to make work zones safer, including expanding the use of [speed safety vans](#) and deploying more temporary rumble strips approaching projects. As part of the [It’s Not a Game](#) safety campaign, high-traffic work zones will be geotargeted so drivers can hear streaming audio ads, reinforcing safety messages.

“Road workers are out there repairing and maintaining the highways we drive every day to make them safer for us,” **said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly.** “Be a decent human being and respect them and the work they do by slowing down and giving them room so everyone can go home safely.”

Each year, an average of nearly 6,300 crashes occurs in Illinois work zones, resulting in more than 1,600 injuries. Preliminary statistics for 2024 show that 13 people died in work zones in Illinois, including four workers, a reminder that crashes in work zones generally have a much greater impact on drivers and their passengers.

“Our highest priority is protecting everyone who uses or works on our roads, and that commitment extends to providing the safest possible work zones as we reconstruct and improve our system, but we’re reminding our customers we need their help,” **said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassandra Rouse.** “Drivers must do their part to protect workers, emergency responders and themselves by taking additional precautions in work zones, including slowing down, following posted speed limits and putting away cellphones to avoid distracted driving. Working together with our customers makes our roads safer for everyone.”

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

- Drop it and drive. Phones and electronic devices down at all times – it’s the law.
- Obey the signs. They will help you safely navigate work zones – and sometimes avoid delays.
- Slow down. The posted speed limits are there for the safety of workers and you.
- Be on the lookout 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 maintenance crew patching potholes 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.

For additional facts, printable materials and information on projects this year in Illinois, click [here](#) or visit [idot.click/work-zones](https://idot.click/work-zones).

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 in the Quad Cities, Rockford’s Morgan Street Bridge and others.

On Friday, IDOT also 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 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](https://itsnotagameillinois.com) for more information.

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