

Drive Safely in Work Zones - Odds Are the Life You Save Will Be Your Own

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To: TRANSPORTATION EDITORS

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ALEXANDRIA, Va., April 3 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Representatives of safety and transportation groups joined the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) today on an unfinished flyover ramp on the western approach to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, to urge motorists to hold to posted speed limits in work zones. The event commemorated National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 2-6.

"More than a thousand people are being killed in highway work zones each year," said John Horsley, Executive Director of AASHTO, which represents the state departments of transportation. "Every one of these work-zone deaths is avoidable. When you enter a work zone, you need to be alert and slow to the posted speed limit."

Most people don't know that more than 80 percent of deaths in roadway work zones are those of drivers and passengers, not roadway workers, Horsley said.

"We want to protect our workers, but considering that speeding and driver inattention are the most often-cited causes of work-zone wrecks, the people with the most at stake have it in their power to save their own lives," he said.

Horsley was joined by Federal Highway Administrator J. Richard Capka and officials of the American Traffic Safety Services Association, the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, the Associated General Contractors, and the transportation departments of Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia in sponsoring the event.

There were 1,074 work-zone fatalities in the U.S. in the year 2005, the most recent year with full-year statistics from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The figure compares with 1,068 work-zone deaths in 2004 and 1,028 such deaths in 2003.

SOURCE American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials