

FDOT Urges National Work Zone Awareness Week

Agency puts priority on keeping motorists and workers safe in highway work zones

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National Work Zone Awareness Week is this week! The Florida Department of Transportation will celebrate National Work Zone Awareness week by continuing its campaign, "Work Zone Safety. It's Everyone's Job." The goal of the campaign is to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities in highway work zones.

"Drivers should always be aware of special conditions occurring in work zones, reduce their speed and minimize or remove all distractions," said FDOT Assistant Secretary Kevin Thibault. "By staying alert and paying close attention, everyone can do their part to ensure safe work zones, saving lives and lowering the number of devastating injuries."

In 2005, the most recent traffic crash data for Florida, 137 fatalities and 3,110 injuries occurred in 4,136 crashes in highway work zones. Although highway construction remains one of the most dangerous jobs in America, nine out of ten persons killed in highway work zones in Florida are motorists or pedestrians.

FDOT is joined by the Florida Highway Patrol, the Federal Highway Administration, the American Traffic Safety Services Association, the Florida Sheriff's Association, the Florida Police Chiefs Association and several other state and national transportation organizations as partners in the campaign.

"The nature of the work at construction sites often produces traffic disruptions and delays. Historically, human factors have led to tragedies involving both workers and road traffic. It is important for motorists to anticipate delays, exercise patience, and comply with posted speed limits and other traffic devices as they approach these sites. For those who do not obey the law, the fines and penalties are costly. However, our goal is to raise public awareness and compliance, which will then result in lives saved," stated Colonel Chris Knight, Director of the Florida Highway Patrol.

FDOT urges motorists of all ages to drive safely in highway work zones by following these safety tips:

- **STAY ALERT.** Expect anything to occur when entering a work zone.
- **PAY CLOSE ATTENTION.** Signs and work zone flaggers save lives.
- **TURN ON YOUR HEADLIGHTS.** Workers and other motorists must see you.
- **DON'T TAILGATE.** Unexpected stops frequently occur in work zones.
- **DON'T SPEED.** Note the posted speed limits in and around the work zone.
- **KEEP UP WITH THE TRAFFIC FLOW.** Dedicate your full attention to the roadway and those traveling around you.
- **DON'T CHANGE LANES IN THE WORK ZONE.** The time saved just isn't worth the chance.
- **MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS.** Avoid changing radio stations and using cell phones while driving in the work zone.
- **EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.** Keep an eye out for workers and their equipment.
- **BE PATIENT.** Remember, the work zone crewmembers are working to improve your future ride.

Links for this story:

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