

Speeding in I-84 work zone nets bigger fines

Posted: Monday, April 9, 2007 2:56 AM EDT

Public safety: Troopers can give tickets for enhanced penalties if drivers fail to heed 10-mph reduction in Meridian

Idaho Press-Tribune

MERIDIAN — Commuters who want to rush to work on Interstate 84 face a costly fine if they speed through the work zone for the Locust Grove Road overpass in Meridian.

Idaho State Police troopers are keeping a close eye on motorists as they pass through the construction area, where the speed limit has been reduced from 65 mph to 55 mph.

Crews are building a new overpass that will connect Locust Grove and offer an additional route over the freeway between Eagle Road and Meridian Road. In late March, the Idaho Transportation Department narrowed I-84 from four lanes to three for the project.

For the safety of workers, ITD lowered the posted speed limit to 55. But troopers are catching many drivers who don't heed the lower limit — and because it's a construction zone, it's an expensive move.

Typically, speeding 10 mph over the limit on a state highway nets a \$62 fine. But Idaho has enhanced penalties for work zone violations, so the fine rises to \$91.50 for drivers who speed through the Locust Grove project.

As the busiest stretch of highway in the state, troopers patrol the I-84 corridor heavily, paying special attention to construction zones. An average of 92,000 vehicles a day pass through the Locust Grove work area.

Motorists can expect the inside lane of the freeway to be closed into October as workers build the center pier for the new overpass.

The Locust Grove work is scheduled to be finished in the spring of 2008, but it's only the beginning of several projects ahead that will affect traffic from Canyon County to Boise.

ITD is preparing to build an intersection at Ten Mile Road, widen the freeway from two to three lanes in each direction from Caldwell to Meridian, and is slated to eventually add a connection for Idaho Highway 16 from Emmett to the freeway near the Canyon-Ada County border.

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