



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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News release

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April 15-19 is Work Zone Awareness Week

With road construction season now underway, Kenosha County officials are reminding drivers to pay attention and slow down in work zones.

The week of April 15-19 is National Work Zone Awareness Week, a call to action for drivers to keep safety at the top of their minds while driving in construction areas.

“Work zones are temporary; actions behind the wheel can last forever,” said Kenosha County Executive Samantha Kerkman, echoing this year’s Work Zone Awareness Week theme. “By paying attention, slowing down and eliminating distractions while driving, you can make a real difference in keeping road workers safe and preventing accidents.”

According to Wisconsin Department of Transportation data, from 2019 through 2023 there were more than 10,600 crashes in Wisconsin work zones, causing 64 deaths and more than 3,800 injuries.

In Wisconsin, work zones can vary in all shapes and sizes. They include major highway construction and rehabilitation, maintenance, emergency response, utility work, municipal projects and more — any time there are flashing lights, signs, barrels or workers on the road.

“They want to go home, too,” Kenosha County Highway Director Clement Abongwa said, of the workers who make road projects a reality. “We ask everyone on the road to eliminate distractions and be mindful of their speed. Even in areas with reduced speed limits, things can happen in an instant. Always expect the unexpected.”

Emergency and work zones are protected by Wisconsin laws that aim to keep workers safe. Fines double in construction zones, and handheld cellphone use is banned. Additionally, a state law that took effect in December 2021 extends these protections to areas surrounding emergency response vehicles with flashing lights.

Abongwa also reminds drivers of the state's Move Over Law, which requires drivers to shift lanes or slow down to provide a safety buffer for a law enforcement squad, ambulance, firetruck, tow truck, utility vehicle, or highway maintenance vehicle that is stopped on the side of the road with its warning lights flashing.

Some additional safety tips:

- Eliminate distractions like eating, drinking, talking on the phone or fiddling with electronic devices.
- Expect the unexpected in work zones. Speed limits may be reduced, traffic lanes may be changed, and people may be working near the road.
- Slow down. A car traveling 60 mph travels 88 feet per second. The faster you go, the longer it takes to stop.
- Give yourself room. Rear-end collisions are the most common work zone crashes, so do not tailgate.
- Look for signs. Orange, diamond-shaped signs usually give ample warning of lane closures, construction areas, and flaggers and other workers ahead.
- Be patient. If you don't see workers, that doesn't mean they're not there. Observe the signs until you see one that says you've left the work zone.
- Plan ahead. Leave early or map out an alternative route. Find the latest road conditions and work zone news at <https://511wi.gov>.
- Follow the law. Slow down and move over, if possible, when you see flashing lights.
- Consider turning off your phone until you reach your destination.
- If you must make a call, find a safe place to pull over and stop, such as a wayside or gas station.

Learn more at <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/safety/education/workzone/default.aspx>.

Show your support for work zone safety:

Wednesday, April 17, is "Go Orange Day," during which people are encouraged to wear something orange in support of highway safety. Social media pictures and posts using the #OrangeForSafety hashtag are welcome, but please always refrain from using electronics while driving.

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