



Work Zones

TSH 01 • OCT 2020

LENGTH 10–15 minutes

TO PREPARE Read the background information.

BACKGROUND

- When you talk to your employees about driving safely through work zones, they may be surprised to learn that 85 percent of people killed in work zone crashes are motorists. While the safety of the workers in the work zones is predominantly important, many motorists will speed through a work zone or proceed without caution when they do not see workers present in the zone. This lack of caution is problematic for the vehicle occupants.
- Each year approximately 1,000 people die and thousands are injured in work zone crashes.

DISCUSSION

- When you take into account that work zones are set up by cities and counties, a map of our state is covered with dots representing work zones on our highways and streets.
- Have you ever passed through a work zone that seemed unoccupied and thought, “Gee whiz, why don’t they take down these signs and cones so I can get home faster?” It turns out these precautionary devices are helping you stay safe too—not just the workers in the zones



What conditions in a work zone might make it hazardous for the unconcerned driver?

- loose gravel
- narrowing lanes
- uneven pavement
- vehicles working that make sudden stops or move very slowly



What recommendations are made by the state’s department of transportation (DOT) regarding safe driving through work zones?

- Be alert to changing road and traffic conditions; prepare for the unexpected.



- Be patient when delays occur. Aggressive driving increases the danger for everyone.
- Minimize distractions by putting your cell phone and other distracting devices away. Someone's life may depend on it.
- Obey road side flaggers.
- Plan ahead by leaving a little earlier so you won't be stressed about being late.
- Slow down when directed to do so by signage or workers present.



Do you know what the Move Over/Slow Down Law requires?

- Drivers must move over a lane or reduce their speed to 20 mph below the posted limit when they see flashing blue or amber lights on a DOT vehicle, emergency vehicle, or tow truck stopped on the roadside or shoulder.
- Fines for failure to do so can be pretty high so pay attention!

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

- Use this video from the Texas Department of Insurance to re-cap the discussion:
 - <https://www.tdi.texas.gov/takefive/safety/work-zone-driving-tips.html>
- Discuss new points mentioned in the video that have not been covered in the above discussion. Have you ever hit a rough patch in a work zone that surprised you? Slowing down is key in avoiding damage to your vehicle.

SUMMARY

- Make sure everyone in your safety talk discussion knows how to drive safely through work zones. Remind drivers that they are at risk: 85% of people killed in work zones are motorists.
- Slowing down, following posted work zone speed limits, staying alert, putting the phone away, and obeying flaggers will make the road safer for all its users—both inside and outside of vehicles.