

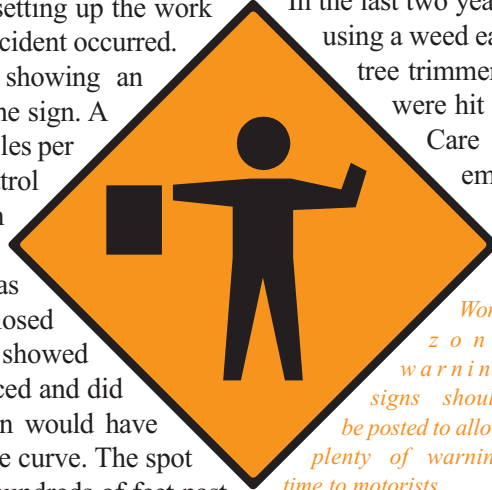
DEADLY Mistakes

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Fatal Event: On Jan. 3, 2006, an employee

was struck by a car while his crew was setting up a section of road as a work construction area. Immediately after the accident, doctors amputated the worker's legs in efforts to save his life. Despite medical efforts, the victim died 11 days later.

Investigative Results: The crew was setting up the work zone near a curve in the road when the accident occurred. The victim was standing in the road showing an employee how to place the first work zone sign. A motorist rounded the curve at about 50 miles per hour and struck the victim. A Highway Patrol report said the position of the rising sun was a factor in the accident. The motorist confirmed that his vision was affected by the rising sun and may have closed his eyes momentarily. The investigation showed that warning signs were not properly placed and did not take into account the effects the sun would have early in the morning as drivers rounded the curve. The spot chosen for the first work zone sign was hundreds of feet past the correct spot where the first warning should have been posted. Requirements for traffic control signs, signals, barricades or other worker-protection devices must conform to the appropriate version of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Employee training should include the hazards associated with working near moving traffic.



Discussion: Work zone activity in a designated area on a street or highway where construction is taking place can affect the lives and safety of construction workers as well as drivers. In fact, the N.C. Department of Transportation statistics indicate that more than four out of five work zone crash fatality victims are motorists. Of the 23 construction fatalities investigated by the N.C. Department of Labor in fiscal year 2005, six were struck-by accidents that included road construction workers. In the last two years, an employee on a mower, an employee using a weed eater, a meter reader crossing the highway, a tree trimmer, and a truck driver with a stalled vehicle were hit while working beside a highway or street. Care should be taken by motorists, as well as employees who share the road.

Work Zones Driving Tips

- ◆ Expect the unexpected.
 - ◆ Slow down.
 - ◆ Don't tailgate; keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you.
 - ◆ Pay attention to the signs.
 - ◆ Obey road crew flaggers.
 - ◆ Stay alert and minimize distractions.
 - ◆ Keep up with the traffic flow.
- ◆ Schedule enough time to drive safely.
- ◆ Be patient and stay calm.

Tips provided by the Federal Highway Administration in conjunction with the Seventh Annual National Work Zone Awareness Week held April 3 through April 9.

Work zone warning signs should be posted to allow plenty of warning time to motorists.