



DRIVER SAFETY LETTER



NPTC
National Private Truck Council

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Work Zone Safety

March 2024

Spring is in the air and with the approaching warm weather comes the return of highway maintenance and work zones. The 2024 National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW) is scheduled for April 15-19. This year's theme is "Work Zones are temporary. Actions behind the wheel can last forever." The kick-off event is scheduled for April 16.

Each year more than 700 fatalities happen in work zones across the nation. Both commercial motor vehicle (CMV) and passenger vehicle drivers need to be extra careful while traveling through work zones. Sadly, accidents resulting in fatalities involving CMVs in work zones have been increasing year after year.

CMV involvement in non-work zone fatal crashes have consistently involved 10-13% of all fatal crashes over time. But when it comes to work zones, CMVs are involved in more than 30% of fatal work zone crashes on urban interstates and more than 50% percent on rural interstates. CMV involvement is also higher than overall trends in fatal work zone crashes on other roadway types.

It is not clear from the available data whether the overrepresentation of CMV involvement in fatal work zone crashes is due to:

- More work zones on roadways with more CMVs.
- More CMVs traveling to and from the work zone to deliver and take away materials and equipment.
- Whether passenger cars see large trucks as a last-minute entry point to squeeze in at the front of long lines.
- Commercial motor vehicles have limited maneuverability and large blind spots, both of which make operating in these areas more challenging.

In reality, all four possibilities may be partially responsible. So, it will take effort from you as a professional to help reverse these trends. With spring arriving and road repairs, maintenance, and construction now in full swing. Here are some tips to travel safely through work zones.

Research Your Route: Before setting out on the road, research your route. When possible, avoid work zones and use any available detours.

Pay Attention: You should always keep your eyes on the road, but this is exceptionally important in work zones. Be aware of all signage throughout work zones indicating reduced speeds, lane changes and other important information. Avoid distractions such as your phone, eating, drinking, the radio, GPS or conversing with other passengers.

Watch Your Mirrors: Impatient passenger car drivers often see your vehicle as a ticket for entry at the head of a long line of traffic and will speed up on either side to "cut in the line" and avoid waiting in long lines.

Slow Down: Lane closures, traffic pattern shifts and reduced speeds are common in work zones. Make sure to slow down when entering a work zone and keep an eye out for road workers.

Move into the Open Lane: When approaching lane closures, move into the open lane as soon as possible. Be sure to pay close attention to vehicles around you that could be in your blind spot.

Keep Your Distance: Rear-end crashes are extremely common in work zones. Always maintain extra space between your vehicle and the one in front of you.

*The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and **Centerline Drivers**, is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at tmoore@nptc.org or (703)838-8898.*