FACTS ABOUT WORK ZONE SAFETY

Whether you work in an office or on the roadways, everyone deserves to get home safely. The 2019 theme for Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, *Drive Like You Work Here*, reminds drivers that while they may work in the safety of an office with walls, others work amid the real dangers of roadway work zones. And it is not only workers that are in peril - most victims in work zone crashes are drivers or their passengers.

**Georgia DOT and Work Zone Safety**
- Since 1973, 60 Georgia DOT employees have died in work zone related incidents.
- Fatal work zone crashes are on the rise in Georgia with a steady increase from 23 fatalities in 2014 to 55 fatalities in 2017. In 2018 there were 52 fatalities in work zones, which include only the public; there were no work zone fatalities for workers in Georgia in 2018.
- In 2018, there were 27,235 total crashes in Georgia work zones, resulting in 8,928 injuries.
- 60 percent of all work zone crashes are associated with roadway departure and rear end collisions, which often relate to distraction, driving too fast for conditions and driver impairment (under the influence or fatigued).
- Truck-involved and pedestrian-involved work zone fatalities are also a concern with 14 fatalities involving commercial motor vehicles and 30 pedestrian-involved fatalities in Georgia work zones in 2018.

**Background**
- **National Work Zone Awareness Week** (NWZAW), which began in 1999, is an annual spring campaign sponsored by federal, state and local transportation officials to raise the public consciousness about the need for driving safely in work zones. The campaign draws attention to the safety needs of road workers, as well as motorists. NWZAW is held at the start of the highway construction season across most of the country.
- The week-long observance is designed to inform motorists about the dangers of driving through work zones and of the perils faced not only by construction and maintenance workers, but also first responders like law enforcement, Georgia DOT HERO and CHAMP operators and tow truck drivers.
- According to the Federal Highway Administration, nationally:
  - Fatal work zone crashes increased 32% from 2013 to 2017;
o 799 work zone fatalities occurred in 2017 (up 19 percent from 2014);
o 61,000 work zone injuries occurred in 2016, up about 43 percent from previous 3-year average of 42,333;
o 132 worker fatalities occurred in 2017 (previous 3-year average 135); and
o There were 265 fatalities involving large trucks and buses in work zones in 2017 (previous 3-yr average 231)

10 Tips for Driving in Work Zones

• **Drive Like You Work Here.** Obey the rules of work zones: (1) Pay attention (2) Slow down (3) Watch for workers
• **Expect the Unexpected.** Things may change quickly. Normal speed limits may be reduced, traffic lanes may be closed, narrowed, or shifted, and people may work on or near the road.
• **Don’t Speed.** Obey the posted speed limit, even when workers are not present. In Georgia in 2018, there were 31 fatal speed-related work zone crashes.
• **Don’t Tailgate.** Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you and the construction workers and their equipment.
• **Obey Road Crew Flaggers and Pay Attention to Signs.** Failure to obey speed limit signs or a flagger’s traffic control directions can result in hefty fines and/or imprisonment.
• **Stay Alert and Minimize Distractions.** Give your full attention to the roadway and avoid changing radio stations or using cell phones and other electronic devices while approaching and driving in a work zone.
• **Keep Up with the Traffic Flow.** Do not slow down to gawk at road work.
• **Know Before You Go.** Expect delays, leave early and schedule enough time to drive safely. For 24/7 real-time traffic information, call 511 or visit www.511ga.org before you get into the car. And follow Georgia DOT on Twitter for additional updates.
• **Be Patient and Stay Calm.** Work zone crews are working to improve the road and make your future drive better.
• **Wear Your Seatbelt.** It is your best defense in a crash. And make sure your passengers are also buckled up.

Remember – Significant others, dads, moms, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters work here! Drive like you work here, too.

Work Zone Safety and Georgia Driving Laws

Distracted driving is a key cause of many crashes, and this especially applies in work zones. In addition to DUI and impaired driving laws, Georgia driving laws include:

• **Drivers, put down the phone.** Georgia’s Hands-Free Law requires hands-free technology when drivers use cell phones and other electronic devices. It is illegal for a driver to hold a phone in their hand or use their body to support a phone.
• **Move over for stopped emergency vehicles.** Georgia’s Move-Over Law requires drivers to move over one lane if possible when approaching stationary highway maintenance and construction workers, HERO and CHAMP operators, law enforcement or emergency vehicles, firefighters, paramedics, tow truck operators and utility service vehicles flashing emergency lights. If it unsafe to move over, slow down below the posted speed and be prepared to stop.
• **Buckle up.** While Georgia law requires that front seat passengers wear a safety belt, GDOT recommends that all occupants buckle up. In a crash, an unrestrained passenger can injure or kill another occupant.

For details on Georgia’s driving laws visit https://www.gahighwaysafety.org/highway-safety/.

For more information and to view GDOT’s work zone safety videos, visit www.dot.ga.gov.

#NWZAW #DriveLikeYouWorkHere #Orange4Safety