

National Work Zone Safety Week

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Few experiences are more synonymous with summer than ice cream, fireworks, and work zones on our highways. While we enjoy highways and roads that are smooth and easy to drive on, work zones disrupt our commutes and force traffic to be backed up for miles. This forced slow down, coupled with the dedicated crews of men and women working along the highway, can create a recipe for disaster and is cause for extreme caution.

In the US, one work zone death occurs for each \$112 million worth of roadway expenditures. The most recent data suggests that fatal crashes in work zones increased by 3% while fatal crashes outside of work zones decreased by 1.5% in that same time frame. 799 fatalities occurred in work zones in 2017.

Work zones introduce countless variables for the work crew and drivers passing through that increase the risk of a serious motor vehicle accident. The US Department of Highways Federal Highway Administration, has produced the following recommendations to help keep drivers and workers safe:

- **Stay alert and minimize distractions.** The driver's attention should always be squarely on the road ahead, however, this is even more crucial while traveling through a work zone. It is imperative that you minimize distractions, avoid cell phone use or changing the radio station, and any other distractions that may take your eyes off the road.
- **Keep your headlights on.**
- **Follow road signs.** Work zones often include orange advisory signs that dictate the flow of traffic, such as lane shifts or reduced speed limits. It is imperative that you appreciate these signs and follow their direction.
- **Merge into proper lane.** It is important that you merge well ahead of reaching the lane closure and remember that traffic patterns can change daily. As a result, please follow all signs even if the route you are traveling is familiar to you. You should also only change lanes when and where a lane change is permitted. It is not uncommon for work zones to not permit lane changes when the lanes have been narrowed by the construction.
- **Do not tailgate.** Work zones may periodically require cars to stop with little to no warning. This is especially the case if a flagger is present and periodically stopping traffic. As a result, it is

critical that you remain alert and allow a safe distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you.

- **Obey the posted speed limit.** Remember, the speed limits are always reduced in work zones and that fines are often doubled for violations. Drivers must maintain a reasonable speed as workers are often focused on completing tasks merely feet away from the flow of traffic. Reducing your speed is critical as it only takes an extra 25 seconds to cover 1 mile at 45 MPH compared to 65 MPH.

The stopping distance for motor vehicles at 50 MPH is as follows:

Dry roadway - 300 feet

Wet roadway - 400 feet

Icy pavement - 1250 feet

- **Expect the unexpected.** Work zones are fluid and workers, work vehicles, or equipment may enter your lane with little warning as progress continues on the project. This may cause other vehicles to slow or stop suddenly with little warning.
- **Be patient.** Please remember that the workers understand the impact of slowed or stopped traffic on your commute. It is important to remain patient as you enter and pass through a work zone.

The road safety attorneys at Bailey Glasser understand the nuances of work zones and the safety expectations of both drivers and workers. In the event you or a loved has been injured in a motor vehicle accident our experienced attorneys are ready for your free initial consultation. Please drive safely, obey all work zone signs, and remember that Bailey Glasser is here when you need us most.

Attorneys

Travis A. Prince

Practice Areas

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