



NEWS

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CULLERTON AND ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PROPOSE NEW AND ENHANCED PENALTIES TO PROTECT ROADWAY WORKERS AND INCREASE SAFETY

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway is joining with State Sen. Tom Cullerton to propose new safety legislation aimed at helping protect roadway workers and improving safety by enacting a new, \$1,000 fine for drivers who intentionally cut through work zones. Legislation is also being targeted to increase the fine for hitting a worker.

The proposed legislation follows the September 14 death of construction worker Frank Caputo, who was repairing pavement in a work zone on the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) when he was struck and killed by a car traveling in the marked work zone.

“This legislation sends a strong message to drivers that they must stay out of work zones and avoid any workers they encounter along the road,” Cullerton said. “We want drivers to remember that deaths in work zones are 100 percent preventable if they use caution, avoid unsafe driving practices and stay alert for workers.”

The Tollway is supporting safety legislation introduced by Sen. Cullerton that would enhance penalties for dangerous driving in work zones to promote safety and deter reckless and irresponsible driving.

Illinois averages about 4,800 work zone crashes annually, according to the Illinois Department of Transportation. This year, 14 people have died in work zone crashes, including Caputo, according to provisional IDOT data.

The legislation would create a new, \$1,000 fine for drivers who intentionally enter or cut through work zones. Current work zone penalties provide fines for speeding, but not specifically for drivers who encroach on work zones.

Another provision of the legislation would increase the maximum fine for a driver who strikes a worker from \$10,000 to \$25,000. Drivers who strike and kill a worker also face felony charges that carry a maximum sentence of 14 years in prison.

“The Tollway places a high priority on making work zones safer to better protect the men and women building, repairing and improving our roads as well as the drivers traveling through work zones,” said Illinois Tollway Board Chairman Bob Schillerstrom. “We are always looking for new ways to improve work zone safety and we believe changing the law will encourage safer driving and provide more protection to workers.”

The proposed legislation follows appeals by the Tollway for greater public awareness of work zone safety precautions and stepped up participation by drivers in alerting the Tollway and Illinois State Police when they witness unsafe driving in work zones.

The legislation encourages drivers to dial *999 to report vehicles they see entering or driving through work zones.

“The Tollway will continue to do everything it can but we are asking the legislature for its help to ensure everyone working and traveling on our roadways makes it home safely,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Liz Gorman. “Working together with our legislators, we want to deter unsafe and careless driving in work zones by increasing the penalties for drivers who disregard traffic safety laws.”

About the Illinois Tollway

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 294 miles of roadways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway.

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