



State of Illinois
JB Pritzker, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation
Omer Osman, Acting Secretary

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In Illinois work zones, “Drive Like You Work Here”

Work zone safety week comes amid alarming spike in trooper deaths

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police, Illinois Tollway, industry partners and frontline construction workers joined forces today for National Work Zone Awareness Week, asking the public to “Drive Like You Work Here.” To signal the start of construction season and call attention to the life and death issues facing workers and law enforcement, Gov. JB Pritzker proclaimed April 8-12 as “Work Zone Safety Awareness Week” in Illinois.

“The hardworking men and women that keep up our roadways deserve to work in a safe environment,” said Gov. JB Pritzker. “Especially after the tragic and senseless loss of our state troopers, it’s critical that everyone on the road do their part. Pay close attention and slow down in work zones so that every worker can get home to their family.”

The theme for this year’s National Work Zone Awareness Week is “Drive Like You Work Here,” reinforcing the message that drivers must slow down, avoid all distractions and proceed cautiously in and around construction sites or stopped vehicles. Lane closures, changes in traffic patterns, reduced speed limits and the presence of workers and equipment demands special attention from the motoring public.

“If you are on our roads, you will be driving through work zones and should expect the unexpected,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “Always remember, the people you pass working on equipment or behind the cones and barricades are someone’s father, mother, son, daughter, friend or neighbor. At the end of the day, they want to get home safely, just like you.”

This year’s awareness week comes amid an alarming spike in motorists striking ISP vehicles. Three troopers have lost their lives already in 2019 in traffic-related fatalities.

“The Illinois State Police will continue to bring awareness to the public regarding issues that affect the lives and safety of the workers of Illinois,” said ISP Acting Director Brendan Kelly. “The goal of this week is to encourage people to make responsible choices and focus on the road when they get behind the wheel, so that together we can prevent another tragic loss to another family.”

Each year, more than 5,300 motor vehicle crashes on average occur in Illinois work zones, resulting in more than 1,500 injuries. In 2018, 18 people died in work zones in Illinois, including one worker – the lowest total since at least 2001, but still far too many.

“The Illinois Tollway places the highest priority on safety,” said Illinois Tollway Board of Directors Chairman Will Evans. “As an organization, we are constantly seeking innovative ways to make our roadways safer, but we cannot succeed without the public’s help. Ultimately, we need drivers to be more aware and focused in order to protect those patrolling and working on our roads.”

The following guidelines for traveling through work zones should be followed at all times:

- Drop it and drive. Phones and electronic devices down at all times – it’s the law.
- Obey the signs. They will help you safely navigate work zones – and sometimes avoid delays.
- Slow down. The posted speed limits are there for the safety of workers and you.
- Be on the lookout for slowed or stopped traffic.
- Consider the limitations of heavy equipment, trucks and commercial vehicles. Provide them extra distance to come to a complete stop if they are behind you.

To promote safety in the field this week, IDOT is once again promoting “tailgate talks” to give workers refreshers on work zone protocol. This Friday, Laborers will continue their tradition of staffing rest areas across the state and distributing materials that stress the importance of safe driving through work zones.

For additional facts, printable materials and information on highway projects this year in Illinois, click [here](#) or visit idot.illinois.gov.

Work zone safety is yet another element of IDOT’s comprehensive multimedia campaign, Life or Death Illinois, highlighting the incredible responsibility of each driver to make good decisions and decrease the number of lives lost each year. Visit lifeordeathillinois.com for more information.

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