



MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Work Zone Safety

A lot of construction and maintenance is done on our roads during warm weather months – so expect to find work zones when you travel this time of year.

Last year in Maine, about 650 crashes occurred in work zones, resulting in 3 fatalities and 220 injuries. Most injuries and fatalities occur to the drivers or their passengers, not those working on or near the road, but those working in the work zones are usually the most vulnerable.

The MaineDOT wants drivers to be safe for everyone's sake. Watch for orange signs that warn of upcoming work zones. Here are some important tips:

- Do not change lanes or pass in work zones.
- At merges, move left or right as soon as possible to maintain a smooth flow of traffic and to minimize sudden braking.
- Watch for flaggers and follow their instructions. Their job is to keep everyone moving and safe.
- Watch for special speed limit signs and obey them. Remember that fines are often doubled in work zones.

Reconstruction, paving, grass cutting, tree trimming and utility work in or alongside roads present dangers to those doing the work as well as those driving by. The majority of crashes in work zones involve drivers who are not paying attention or traveling at unsafe speed.

Nationally, nearly 1,200 people are killed and 40,000 injured in work zone crashes each year. Fatalities have increased substantially during the last several years. The following are safety tips provided by the MaineDOT:

- Drive at the posted work zone speed. There is no standard speed limit in work zones, so stay alert and watch for posted signs.
- The penalty for speeding in a work zone is often double the usual fine.



- Unexpected stops are common in work zones. Be sure to leave plenty of room between your car and traffic ahead – at least a three second following distance (even longer in poor weather or when visibility is blocked.)
 - Avoid fixing your attention on the road work – it is fascinating, but also can be a distraction from other things that you need to watch for on the road.
 - Watch for and follow the work zone signs and road markings – they are intended to safely guide you through work areas as efficiently as possible.
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Maine experienced over 7,400 work zone crashes over the past 10 years, resulting in 21 fatalities and 3,300 injuries. The MaineDOT reminds you that:

- Excessive speed and driver distraction are a factor in nearly 60% of all work zone crashes in Maine.
- Orange signs, cones and barrels alert you to work zones. When you see ORANGE along the highway, think safety and be alert.
- Watch the road and not the work. Expect the unexpected and maintain a safe following distance.
- Allow for extra travel time when planning your trip. Construction delays are common this time of year, so include them in your planning.
- When possible, seek alternate routes to help reduce congestion.
- Check www.511maine.org or call 511 for traffic conditions before you get on the road.

The fine for speeding in Work Zones can be doubled.

- There are hundreds of Work Zones in Maine each year. Work Zones are on the Interstate, bridges, hundreds of highways and secondary roads, and even city streets.
- Work zones may be short term such as work on utility lines, tree trimming or mowing, as well as longer term construction – **use caution in all work zones.**
- Expect reduced speed limits. They are based on lane width, the type of work being done, the presence of people and equipment, the amount of curvature in the road and other factors.
- Posted speed limits in Work Zones vary, so watch for signs, pay attention and drive carefully. Remember, fines may be doubled for work zone violations.

Be a Road Model: Keep yourself and others safe in work zones and always wear your seatbelt.