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STATE POLICE

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## **PennDOT, PA Turnpike, PSP, Construction Industry Highlight National Work Zone Awareness Week**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PA Turnpike), the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and Associated Pennsylvania Constructors (APC) hosted an event today urging motorists to slow down and pay attention in work zones ahead of National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW). The week, which runs April 17-21, is designated to encourage safe driving through work zones. The theme of this year's NWZAW is "You play a role in work zone safety. Work with us."

"Safety is PennDOT's most important priority," **said PennDOT Executive Deputy Secretary Cheryl Moon-Sirianni.** "We implement many safety measures in our work zones, for the safety of both our workers and motorists, but we need drivers to work with us to ensure work zones are safe for everyone. Slow down and never drive distracted, especially in work zones where roadway conditions can change every day. Only by working together can we keep everyone safe."

The PennDOT and PA Turnpike worker memorials were on display during the event to pay tribute to those who have lost their lives while improving and maintaining Pennsylvania's infrastructure. Since 1970, PennDOT has lost 90 workers in the line of duty. The PA Turnpike has lost 45 workers since 1940.

According to preliminary PennDOT data, in 2022 there were 1,293 work zone crashes, resulting in 14 fatalities.

In addition to crash data from police reports, PennDOT and the PA Turnpike monitor work zone safety with internal reports. In 2022, there were 171 reported intrusions in PennDOT work zones. Of those work zone intrusions, 13 resulted in injuries to PennDOT employees, 57 only caused damage to PennDOT equipment or vehicles, and 101 did not result in injury or damage but had the potential to do so. There were eight reported work zone intrusions in PA Turnpike work zones resulting in two injuries, while six only caused property damage.

Many precautions are taken in work zones to keep workers safe, including proper training and routine safety inspections for workers, enhanced signing and information for motorists, and the use of positive protective equipment like crash trucks, barriers, and rumble strips. Drivers also play a role in keeping workers, themselves, and other motorists safe while traveling through

work zones. The agencies urged drivers to always follow posted work zone speed limits and never drive distracted.

Standing in front of roadway equipment with lost worker memorials surrounding him, **PA Turnpike CEO Mark Compton** referenced the equipment used to keep workers safe, “Behind me you see what our teams use to mitigate work zone accidents and keep our workers safe,” Compton said. “Tragically, in front of me and all around, you see the evidence that heavy equipment cannot fully protect our team members when drivers are not paying attention or choose to ignore roadway signage and warnings. At this point in time distracted driving behaviors are more prominent than ever before. We must change those behaviors.

“Next week, during National Work Zone Safety Week, we will be working with our State Police Troop T to discourage these unsafe behaviors using enforcement actions in every work zone across our system. Our pledge is to keep all of our workers and drivers safe. We ask you to also make that pledge because staying focused is no accident.”

**Associated Pennsylvania Constructors Executive Vice President Robert Latham** emphasized that highway workers risk their lives every day in order to maintain a roadway system that is safe for the motoring public in Pennsylvania and across the country. “The tragedy that occurred last month in our neighboring state of Maryland placed a national spotlight on just how dangerous it is for our highway workers to do their daily jobs,” said Latham. “We’re urging drivers to slow down and stay alert in work zones. Every worker deserves to go home.”

Cell phone use is not the only distraction while driving. Other common distractions include eating and drinking, reaching for objects inside the vehicle, changing settings in the vehicle, brushing hair or applying makeup, and over-engaging with passengers, to name a few.

In Pennsylvania, there are two distinct programs related to active work zones. [Under Title 75, Section 3326](#), motorists caught by police driving 11 mph or more above the posted speed limit in an active work zone, or who are involved in a crash in an active work zone and are convicted for failing to drive at a safe speed, automatically lose their license for 15 days. Additionally, fines for certain traffic violations — including speeding, driving under the influence, and failure to obey traffic devices — are doubled for active work zones. The law also provides for up to five years of additional jail time for individuals convicted of homicide by vehicle for a crash that occurred in an active work zone.

Under [Title 75, Section 3369](#), fines are allowed to be administered through the Automated Work Zone Speed Enforcement (AWZSE) program. Pennsylvania’s AWZSE program, [first implemented in March 2020](#), uses vehicle-mounted systems to detect and record motorists exceeding posted work zone speed limits by 11 miles per hour or more using electronic speed timing devices. AWZSE systems are only operational in active work zones where workers are present. Work Zones that have an AWZSE system present and active will have unique signs in advance of the enforcement area, alerting drivers to the upcoming enforcement. Registered owners receive a warning letter for a first offense, a violation notice and \$75 fine for a second offense, and a violation notice and \$150 fine for third and subsequent offenses. These violations are civil penalties only; no points are assessed to driver’s licenses. For more information on the Automated Work Zone Speed Enforcement program, including a list of projects where the units are deployed, visit <https://workzonecameras.penndot.gov/>.

“Automated speed enforcement and increased penalties in work zones help to keep workers safe,” **said PSP Bureau of Patrol Director Major Robert Krol**. “There is no excuse for

speeding in work zones. Everyone should obey the posted speed limits, buckle up, and pay attention to the road.”

For more information on work zone safety, visit [www.PennDOT.pa.gov/Safety](http://www.PennDOT.pa.gov/Safety).

Subscribe to PennDOT news and traffic alerts in your county at [www.PennDOT.pa.gov/RegionalOffices](http://www.PennDOT.pa.gov/RegionalOffices). Find PennDOT’s planned and active construction projects at [www.projects.penndot.gov](http://www.projects.penndot.gov).

For more information on work zone safety and an opportunity to take the safe-driving pledge, visit <https://www.idriveorange.com/>.

The public can join the conversation on social media by using #NWZAW and #Orange4Safety.

**Editor’s Note:** Photos and video from this event will be available at [www.pacast.com](http://www.pacast.com).

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