



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
TRANSPORTATION CABINET  
transportation.ky.gov

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Gov. Beshear, Transportation Cabinet Remind Drivers “Slow is Safe When  
Traveling Through Work Zones”**

*National Work Zone Awareness Week is April 17-21*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 17, 2023)** – Slow down, put the phone down. Following this simple practice can save lives, and it could be yours.

Kentucky last year recorded 1,074 crashes in construction and maintenance/utility work zones. Six people were killed and 271 were injured. Two of the six fatalities were motorists or their passengers. While [last year's numbers](#) show a reduction compared to 2021, eliminating preventable deaths in work zones remains the goal.

“The spring and summer months are peak construction seasons, so we’re all likely to see orange signs and barrels on our commutes warning that a work zone is ahead,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “I want every Kentuckian, whether they are behind the wheel or barrier wall to make it home safe at the end of the day. Simple behaviors like reducing your speed and driving without distractions keep workers and motorists safe. Safe drivers plus safe workers mean safe work zones.”

National Work Zone Awareness Week begins on Monday, April 17, and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) is joining other state transportation agencies to promote safe driver and worker practices to save lives and prevent injuries.

A work zone is anywhere a crew member is working. Work zones can involve construction workers, maintenance workers, utility crews, mowing contractors, brush cutters and tree trimmers.

“Drivers may be surprised to learn that they are the most vulnerable to be killed or injured in a work zone,” KYTC Secretary Gray said. “We all have an interest in staying safe in work zones, whether it’s a long-term construction project or a mobile operation, like patching potholes. Waiting to send that text or slowing down could make a life or death difference for motorists and workers.”

Year after year, the majority of victims are drivers or their passengers, and most work zone crashes in 2022 occurred in the daytime. In addition, law enforcement crash reports indicate that distracted driving was a factor in at least 43% of work zone crashes last year.

KYTC has an ongoing effort to increase safety in work zones through a combination of equipment innovations and training. They include temporary rumble strips, made of heavy rubber, which are portable and can be moved as a work zone advances.

They also include the use of a queue protection vehicle, also called a crash cushion, which is a large, truck-mounted shock absorber equipped with warning lights and message board. It is positioned on the shoulder of the highway, a half-mile before stopped traffic, and moves with the traffic queue.

“A work zone crew’s ‘office’ may be the emergency shoulder, a grassy median or a blocked-off driving lane,” Secretary Gray said. “We’re doing our part to be safe and ask motorists to do theirs.”

Here are tips for driving safely in a work zone:

- **Pay attention.** Don’t text or talk on the phone. Keep both hands on the wheel.
- **Drive alert.** Watch for speed limit reductions, narrowing lanes, changing traffic patterns and – most importantly – workers.
- **Respect posted speed limits.**
- **Be patient.** Driving 45 mph instead of 55 mph through a 5-mile work zone will only add 1.2 minutes to your trip. Speeding and aggressive driving are major causes of work zone crashes.
- **Keep a safe distance.** Allow space on all sides of your vehicle and maintain a safe following distance. The most common type of work zone crash is a rear-end collision.
- **Respect flaggers and obey their guidance.** A flagger has the same authority as a regulatory sign, so a driver can be cited for disobeying the flagger’s directions.
- **Follow instructions on construction signage.** Those signs are carefully selected to give drivers accurate information and important warnings.
- **Know before you go.** Check out [go.ky.gov](https://go.ky.gov) or use the free WAZE app for traffic and travel information. Select alternate routes when possible. If a work zone cannot be avoided, expect delays and allow for extra time.

To learn more about KYTC’s Vested in Work Zone Safety Campaign, visit [KYTC](https://www.kytc.gov). Work zone testimonials and tips will be shared all week on KYTC’s social media accounts.

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