



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

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### **KYTC encourages drivers to have a vested interest in work zone safety**

*Majority of 2017 work zone victims were motorists, KYTC devotes week to promote safer work zones*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 6, 2018)** – While motorists can expect to see an increase in the number of orange barrels on roadways as warm weather makes its way across the Bluegrass, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) hopes to see a decrease in the number of work zone related incidents in 2018 after a spike last year. With motorists being the primary victims of work zone injuries and fatalities, KYTC is driving attention to National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW) – April 9-13 – to encourage motorists to take a vested interest in work zone safety by navigating through work zones without distractions.

With roadway construction season kicking off in April across Kentucky, many motorists will encounter at least one work zone in their daily commute. Although highway work zones are high-risk sites for crew members, the lives of drivers and their passengers are also on the line. Of the 12 lives lost in work zones last year, 11 were motorists, not road crew workers. Also, the number of work zone crashes rose 33 percent from 675 in 2016 to 1,007 in 2017. Making work zones safe is a shared responsibility for both crews and motorists alike.

“Highway workers are more than just numbers to us,” said Acting Federal Highway Administrator (FHWA) Brandye L. Hendrickson. “Every number has a face, every face has a name and every name has a story that matters. Work zone safety is everybody’s responsibility.”

FHWA statistics are in line with Kentucky’s work zone fatality numbers that indicate motorists are more at risk in a work zone. According to FHWA, in a typical five-day workweek, an average of seven motorists and one worker are killed around the nation in work zones.

Among the contributing causes of work zone crashes, distracted driving is significant. In fact, 44 percent of last year’s work zone crashes listed distracted driving as a factor; speed accounted for only 24 of the overall crashes.

“Distracted driving has become a major concern – not just in work zones, but also in general roadway safety,” said Kentucky Office of Highway Safety Executive Director Dr. Noelle Hunter. “Due to distracted driving last year, there were more than 57,000 crashes on Kentucky roadways, resulting in 14,600 injuries and 147 fatalities. Driving alert – whether in a work zone or along a straight stretch of roadway – has the potential to save lives and reduce the number of crashes dramatically.”

## **State and nationwide solidarity to promote work zone safety**

To promote safer work zones and to prompt a reduction in the number of preventable crashes, Gov. Bevin signed a proclamation declaring April 9-13 Work Zone Safety Week in Kentucky.

Behind every barrel and high-vis vest is a person counting on the caution exercised by an unknown driver. Throughout the week, KYTC will share video and written stories from those affected by work zone crashes, as well as messages from influential partners to encourage safe driving behaviors.

Throughout the week, multiple opportunities are available to invite public involvement to support work zone safety. Kentuckians can join citizens and department of transportation agencies across the country in observing National Go Orange Day by wearing orange on Wednesday, April 11, taking a selfie or group photo and posting it to Facebook or Twitter using hashtags #nwzaw and #kytc.

Also on Wednesday, KYTC invites organizations and citizens throughout the Commonwealth to illuminate buildings, landmarks, bridges, structures and homes with the color orange to show support of work zone safety – a repeat of last year's inaugural Glow Orange, Kentucky initiative. Observers are encouraged to tweet photos of orange-lit structures to Twitter using #glowky. Some prominent structures to look for include the Florence Y'all Water Tower in Florence and the newly constructed Lincoln Bridge in Louisville.

Thursday offers another opportunity for Kentuckians to demonstrate they are vested in work zone safety. KYTC asks industry partners and employees to wear high-vis vests, take a photo and post it on social media using hashtag #vestedinwzsafety.

To help prevent future work zone crashes, the Transportation Cabinet asks drivers to practice three work zone safety tips:

1. Pay Attention – Don't text, eat or perform any other activity while driving.
2. Respect Flaggers – Obey their guidance and watch their direction carefully.
3. Slow Down – Maintain a safe following distance; rear-end collisions are the most common work zone crash.

Always committed to safety, KYTC will continue to raise work zone awareness by sharing work zone stories and tips on social media throughout highway construction season, April-November, when most work zone crashes occur.

To read work zone stories and to stay current with KYTC's 2018 work zone awareness campaign, connect with the Cabinet on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#), and follow the #vestedinwzsafety and #glowky conversations. Be sure to visit the KYTC's new work zone safety [webpage](#).