



News from the Ohio Turnpike

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Improving Work Zone Safety is a Shared Responsibility

National Work Zone Awareness Week runs from April 17-21, 2023.

By Ferzan Ahmed
March 23, 2023

This year, the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission is investing up to \$226 million for capital improvement projects, which includes roadway safety improvements, such as pavement replacement, resurfacing, bridge renovations, and the continuation of the toll collection system modernization program, and more.

The start of the roadway construction season, which occurs every spring, is an opportunity to remind motorists to drive cautiously through work zones on the Ohio Turnpike and elsewhere.

In 2022, nearly 49.6 million motorists – both passenger car and commercial truck customers – traveled on the Ohio Turnpike, which set a record of nearly 3.1 billion miles.

Work zone-related crashes caused by dangerous driving behaviors can be reduced if motorists follow these safety tips: obey the posted speed limit, establish a safe following distance, avoid distractions, pay attention to the signs, and be prepared to slow down or stop.

Speeding and driving off the roadway are the primary causes of crashes in work zones.

Since 2018 on Ohio's roadways, there's been 25,576 work zone-related collisions that resulted in 92 crashes with 101 fatalities, 501 serious injury crashes, 3,042 minor injury crashes, and 19,140 crashes causing property damage, according to the Ohio Department of Public Safety. On average from 2018-2022, there's been 5,044 work zone-related crashes per year on Ohio's roadways.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol, which is the law enforcement agency for the Ohio Turnpike, will be conducting speed enforcement, including aerial enforcement, in work zones along the Ohio Turnpike during the nine-month construction season.

Next month, participating state and federal transportation and safety agencies will promote National Work Zone Awareness Week from April 17-21. The annual campaign encourages safe driving in highway work zones. The campaign's 2023 message to motorists: You play a role in work zone safety. Work with us.

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Dangerous driving behaviors on the Ohio Turnpike and roadways everywhere put maintenance and roadway crews, construction workers and contractors at severe risk in work zones.

The common risky driving behaviors – which are preventable – include speeding and aggressive driving, distracted driving, impaired driving, not wearing seatbelts, and drowsy driving.

In addition to work zone awareness, Move Over, Slow Down is another year-round statewide campaign for motorists to keep top of mind.

To remind motorists of Ohio's Move Over Law, the turnpike commission has installed permanent roadway signs, 'Move Over Slow Down for All Vehicles with Flashing Lights,' on the ramps at all 14 service plazas along the 241-mile Ohio Turnpike.

The law requires drivers to 'move over and slow down' for all stationary vehicles on the side of all highways and roadways with flashing lights. These vehicles include roadway construction and maintenance vehicles, law enforcement vehicles and tow trucks.

Fines are doubled for failing to comply with the law.

We're urging all motorists to be focused when driving through work zones and 'move over and slow down' for all vehicles with flashing lights so that everyone returns home safely to their families at the end of the day.

By eliminating dangerous driving behaviors, most vehicle crashes are preventable.

Together with our partners in law enforcement, safety agencies and the media, we can promote safe driving habits to reduce crashes on the Ohio Turnpike and beyond.

To report unsafe drivers on Ohio's roadways, dial #677.

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