Road Work Safety Meeting Kit



Road workers install, maintain, and improve roads to keep them safe. Road work hazards such as moving vehicles and construction equipment require workers to stay alert and follow safety procedures.

Construction zones can be incredibly dangerous for workers.

Even the most experienced driver can come across road construction and become disoriented. From lane closures to rapidly changing speed limits, road construction presents a host of challenges for truck drivers and highway construction workers alike.

SEVEN WAYS THAT ROAD CONSTRUCTION CAN POSE DANGERS

1. Sudden orange signage: The color orange spells “caution” on the road, but roadwork isn’t always easy to anticipate.
2. Road rage and impatience: Stopped at a construction site and waiting for your turn to drive a new one-lane road can be frustrating.
3. Treating construction workers badly: Between 2003 and 2017, 1,844 workers lost their lives at road construction sites, according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. When a construction worker is waiting to flag your lane through, don’t give them grief for the wait.
4. Loose gravel and skidding tires: Paving or resurfacing roads are a messy business. In the process of improving roads, there are cycles of excavation and rebuilding asphalt that can place a great deal of loose gravel, sticky tar, oil, or even sand on the road.
5. Bypassing on the back roads: When a project shuts down all lanes and sends you on a detour, you’ll need to pay attention to signage to get you back on track to your destination.
6. Slow drives up and down long hills: On small mountain roads under construction, you may find yourself behind a long, slow moving line of traffic going up or down a curving hill.
7. Plan trips around construction: If you have the ability to pre-plan your route, most state transportation departments maintain online maps of ongoing road construction projects.

ROAD MAP TO ROAD WORK SAFETY

1. Before conducting roadwork jobs, review the required tasks, location, and time of day to determine the necessary equipment, personnel, and materials
2. When you start work near a road, evaluate the work site for hazards. Look for blind corners, how heavy the traffic is, and how fast it flows. Note the weather, temperature, and visibility and how they will affect the work that you are doing and how motorists will respond.
3. Get training on traffic control and safe work practices. Set up and maintain your roadside work zone properly. Get training on the equipment that you will use and drive, from the smallest tool to the largest moving vehicle.
4. Get training on the personal protective equipment (PPE) that you are required to wear, including its uses and limitations. Wear high visibility garments on your legs and chest.
5. In the work zone, watch for fast-moving motorists and large construction equipment. Set up parking zones that have safe entrances and exits. Group your vehicles on the same side of the road for visibility.
6. Work facing traffic and stay alert, or station a lookout to watch oncoming traffic. Have an escape route and/or plan of action in place. Watch for backing vehicles because the driver often has a limited view.
7. Use at least one warning sign before the road work area begins to inform motorists that they are approaching an area where workers may be in the road. You may need more signs depending on sight distance along the road.
8. Notify law enforcement if you are going to be controlling traffic and request an enforcement zone if necessary.
9. Road workers should be visible to all other workers in the area and to the motorists passing by.
10. During hours of darkness, your warning garments should be retroreflective, meaning that light shined on the clothing from a headlight, or a work light will reflect back toward the driver or user to increase visibility.
11. Road work is a physical job requiring strength and endurance. Stay fit so your body can do the work. Take frequent microbreaks every 30 minutes to stretch and relax your muscles.
12. Wear appropriate clothing for the climate. Light colored layers and sunscreen protect you during the hot months while layers of moisture-wicking clothing protect you in the cold.

BEST SAFETY ROAD CONSTRUCTION WORKER PRACTICES

1. Always wear high-visibility clothing that adheres to the American National Standard for High-Visibility Safety Apparel and Accessories (ANSI). This includes armbands, hats, and vests made with fluorescent or reflective materials.
2. Identify potential hazards. Be observant on the site, making note of potential hazards around you and approaching them with caution. Always check your blind spots when operating machinery.
3. Be aware of worksite equipment as well as vehicles entering and exiting the work site. Understand the channel lanes to know where walking is prohibited.
4. Use spotters. When loading and unloading equipment from vehicles, always use spotters. As a spotter, you should know where it is safe to stand and which gestures to use to communicate with vehicle operators.

5. Understand and use communication signals. Whether you are loading and unloading equipment or entering or exiting the worksite, always communicate with the workers around you to ensure everyone’s mutual safety.
6. Always apply the parking brake after stopping construction vehicles or equipment. When parking on an incline, use the appropriate block behind or in front of the tires.
7. Never operate construction machinery or a work vehicle without wearing a seatbelt.
8. Exercise caution around worksite vehicles. Whether you are driving a vehicle, or approaching a piece of machinery, exercise the highest degree of caution. Never assume that the operator of a vehicle sees you.
9. Stay hydrated on the job. Construction work is exhausting, especially in the heat of summer, and over-exertion is a common cause of injury.
10. Make eye contact before approaching. Always make sure the operator of a vehicle or piece of machinery sees you before you approach.

FINAL WORD

Road work safety at first blush may seen to be simple. The underlying core for safe and effective operations is for road work personnel to stay alert, focused and attuned at all times to all the functions relevant to operations affecting the work and the general public.