

Working Along the Roadway

Working along the roadway has many risks and hazards. Besides the inherent dangers involved in road construction and public works maintenance; workers must undertake their duties near motorists traveling on roadways.

The number one safety issue in highway work is traffic. Accidents caused by traffic hitting someone or something in the work area usually happen because drivers didn't see the hazard, didn't see the hazard in time to react, or didn't know what to do when they did see it.



Here are a few quick tips for safely working along the roadway:

- First and foremost - **BE VISIBLE**. Wear bright, high-visibility clothing, meeting ANSI standards.
- Always survey the work area for potential hazards. Besides the traffic, what's out there?
- Plan multiple escape routes. Where will you run if a vehicle drives into the work area?
- Use the buddy system. Everybody watches out for everybody else. Frequently glance at oncoming traffic.
- Make eye contact with equipment operators. Be sure you always have eye contact with an operator before approaching equipment. Let the operator know where you're going and what you're doing.
- Never approach equipment from the operator's blind spot. Stay out of the danger zone - the area directly behind the equipment.
- Don't hitch rides on equipment, especially by just hopping on the side of moving equipment and grabbing hold of something. It's easy to fall off and get run over.

- Where's the traffic? Know where you are in relation to the traffic at all times. Don't work with your back to oncoming traffic. Don't bend or stoop toward the traffic lane if working next to live traffic.
- Watch out for large side mirrors on passing vehicles. When stopping on a project or along the highway, check your mirrors and make sure you are clear before opening a door and stepping out.
- Stay out of "crush zones." Don't put yourself near a fixed stationary object or between two pieces of equipment where you can be crushed when something moves.
- Always stay on the working side of the barrier wall and not on the live traffic side. That's why we call it the working side. Don't cross bi-directional traffic or permanent barrier walls on freeways or interstates.
- Buckle up before starting up and running your equipment. Turn on the strobes if available.
- Look in all directions. Remember that it's difficult to see other vehicles that might blend in with their surroundings. You can miss seeing them with a quick glance. Take several seconds to look in each direction.
- Always be alert for emergency equipment and school buses - give them the right of way.
- Check out your traffic control once it's set up. Drive through the advance warning area and work area to make sure all signs and traffic control devices are visible and drivers are not being misled.
- Plan your equipment route through the work zone to minimize the number of turn-arounds and backing up of trucks.
- Watch where you park. Stay out of equipment operator's blind spots or swing radius.
- Know what alerting procedures and communications are being used in the work zone.

Resources and References:

National Work Zone Safety Clearinghouse

<https://www.workzonesafety.org/>

CLRP Manual - Solutions for Safer Roads and Streets

<https://cornell.app.box.com/v/solutions-safer-roads>

CLRP Manual - Work Zone Traffic Control for Local Roads

<https://cornell.app.box.com/v/clrp-ws-wztc>

CLRP Pocket Guide - Work Zone Safety

<https://cornell.app.box.com/v/clrp-pb-wzpg>

CLRP Pocket Guide - Flagger

<https://cornell.app.box.com/v/clrp-pb-fpg>

