



State of Missouri Team:

As we leave winter in our rear-view mirrors, we enter another busy season-construction season. The MoDOT team never takes a break from roadwork. As flowers and trees bloom, you'll see more yellow and orange reflecting signs along the highways. And, this week is National Work Zone Awareness Week.

Last year, despite a period of lower traffic volumes, we lost 27 lives in work zone crashes. At MoDOT, we work to find the right strategies to make work zones a safer place for both drivers and our crews.

One of those strategies is a partnership with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, titled Operation PROTECT. This operation places troopers within work zones to enforce speed limits. Speeding is a top contributor to deadly work zone crashes. In 2020, there was a 75% increase in speed-related work zone fatalities compared to 2019.

Another new strategy this year includes digital alerts to drivers approaching work zones. MoDOT has more than 500 vehicles with this technology. When these vehicles' emergency lights are flashing, it sends alerts to motorists through tools such as the WAZE app. This gives drivers early warnings approaching work zones.

We're asking all drivers to **work with us** this construction season. There are simple actions we can all take behind the wheel to make our highways and work zones a safer place.

First: slow down. When you see MoDOT or other highway worker vehicles or any emergency vehicles with flashing lights on the road, slow down and move over (if it's safe to do so).

It's the law! There are people inside and outside those vehicles who deserve to make it home at the end of each day.

Second: buckle up and put the phone down. In work zones, traffic can stop unexpectedly. Workers can enter the roadway. Last year, distracted driving contributed to more than 260 work zone crashes. No call or text is worth a life. Stay alert. And remember that your best defense in any crash is a seat belt. [Accept the BUPD challenge](#), and pledge to buckle up every trip and put your phone down before driving.

Third: before your trip, check out which work zones you'll encounter on your way by using **MoDOT's Traveler Information Map**. It's available as an app for iPhones and Android phones. You can also call our toll-free number for more information at **888-ASK-MODOT (888-275-6636)**. Calls are answered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

I'm proud of the MoDOT team's innovations and efforts to make work zones a safer place for everyone. We have a strong team with law enforcement, emergency responders and the contractors all working to keep you safe. As state employees, you are dedicated to public service and your Missouri community. Imagine the progress we'll make when we all dedicate ourselves to safe driving in work zones.

Thank you for all you do, and please stay safe and healthy.

Patrick K. McKenna, Director

Missouri Department of Transportation