

July 13, 2020

Governor Cuomo Urges New Yorkers to Slow Down in Work Zones as New York Continues Reopening

As Traffic Increases, New Yorkers Are Urged to Practice Caution As Construction Crews and Law Enforcement Work to Keep Highways Safe

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today, in partnership with the New York State Department of Transportation, Department of Motor Vehicles, the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, State Police and the Thruway Authority reminded motorists of the importance of moving over for highway workers, first responders and others who assist with motor vehicle crashes and roadside incidents. As regions across the state continue reopening, it will bring increased traffic and a greater need for drivers to be aware and respectful of those who work to keep us safe as we travel along New York's roads and bridges.

"While New Yorkers remain vigilant to stop the spread of COVID-19, we must also be mindful of the emergency responders, highway workers, tow truck drivers, police officers and others who work to keep us safe," **Governor Cuomo said.** "As areas across the state continue reopening and more motorists take to the road, I urge all drivers to follow the law, use common sense and be considerate so our brave men and women can work safely."

Recognizing and understanding signs leading up to and within a work zone is essential for the safety of all drivers and roadside workers. Motorists are reminded that fines are doubled for speeding in a work zone and in accordance with the Work Zone Safety Act of 2005, convictions of two or more speeding violations in a work zone could result in the suspension of an individual's driver license. More work zone safety tips can be found at thruway.ny.gov.

New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez said "New York is moving forward and so is construction season, which means more maintenance and work crews are out on the road, working alongside fast-moving traffic each day and relying on drivers to be alert, patient and cautious. It is critically important that motorists eliminate distractions, pay attention to driving, slow down and move over for our workers. Their lives depend on it."

Thruway Authority Executive Director Matthew J. Driscoll said, "As traffic increases across New York, we urge motorists to slow down and pay attention when traveling through work zones. Maintenance workers and emergency responders put their lives at risk when working in a construction zone or responding to an incident on the side of the road. It's imperative motorists make the safety of these workers, as well as their own safety, a priority. Like everyone, they want to get home safe to their families at the end of the day."

DMV Commissioner and Chair of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee Mark J.F. Schroeder said, "The COVID-19 pandemic reminds us of the important role filled by our essential workers, including the men and women who maintain and improve our roadways. Please give them the room they need to do their jobs safely so they can get home to their families."

State Police Superintendent Keith M. Corlett said, "Reduced speed limits in work zones are there for a critically important reason - to ensure the safety of workers and everyone travelling on the highway. We urge motorists to choose safety as their top priority by following posted speed limits, driving cautiously through work zones, and moving over for first responders and highway workers. State Troopers will be highly visible in and around work zones and will not have any tolerance for those who speed or drive recklessly."

Last year, the New York State Department of Transportation recorded a total of 521 crashes in road construction zones and 67 intrusions into maintenance zones, resulting in 50 injuries and two fatalities.

New York's Move Over law was enacted in 2011 to protect New Yorkers working along the roadway and has since been expanded to include a wider range of emergency and hazard vehicles. The law requires motorists to drive with care, slow down, and safely move over when approaching law enforcement vehicles, fire trucks, ambulances, tow trucks, construction and maintenance vehicles that are stopped along roads across the state. The Move Over law applies to both sides of the roadway, not just the shoulder on the right, and motorists caught in violation can face two points on their license and a minimum \$150 fine for the first offense.

The law was expanded in July 2016, to include volunteer firefighter and ambulance workers, previously applying only to law enforcement, emergency or hazard vehicles; and now applies to vehicles with flashing blue, green, red, white, or amber lights. The expanded law gives law enforcement more authority to penalize violators who jeopardize the safety of those working along the highway. Motorists must exercise due care on all roads across New York State, and if it is safe to do so, move over one lane to provide adequate space for the vehicles and personnel working on the side of the road. In November 2016, the Move Over law was further expanded to include sanitation vehicles such as garbage and recycling trucks.

NYSDOT recently unveiled a [public service announcement](#) for social media focused on the importance of driving responsibly in work zones as the state continues to reopen. The video highlights the importance of minding the speed limit, eliminating distractions and paying attention in work zones.