

August 27, 2020

Governor Cuomo Announces 1,222 Tickets Already Issued by State Police in 2020 Under "Operation Hardhat," Exceeding Totals for All of 2019

Initiative between NYSP, Department of Transportation and Thruway Authority Aims to Keep Highway Workers Safe in Construction Work Zones

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that the New York State Police have already issued 1,222 tickets during Operation Hardhat, an initiative between State Police, the New York State Department of Transportation and the New York State Thruway Authority, to crack down on work zone violations and highlight the importance of safe driving when encountering construction, maintenance and emergency operations along state highways. With at least three months left in the construction season, this total already surpasses the 1,048 tickets issued by State Troopers during all of 2019.

"Through Operation Hardhat, we continue to aggressively crack down on work zone violators who put our highway workers in harm's way," **Governor Cuomo said.**

"Essential transportation projects and ongoing maintenance activities to keep our highways safe are underway across New York State, and for the safety of our highway workers everyone is obligated to follow the speed limit in work zones and eliminate distractions on the road."

Already in 2020, New York State Police have conducted 37 separate details at DOT and Thruway-operated work zones beginning in July that are expected to continue through November. A total of 1,222 tickets have been issued, including:

- Speeding - 432
- Seatbelts - 112
- Cell Phone - 192
- Move Over - 68
- Failure to Obey Flagger - 2
- Failure to Obey Traffic Control Device - 10
- DWI - 1
- Unsafe lane change - 2
- Other violations - 403

Additional "Operation Hardhat" enforcement details are currently being scheduled with State Troopers patrolling active highway work zones throughout at locations along interstates and other state highways where maintenance and construction activities are underway.

Under "Operation Hardhat" State Troopers are present within the work zones, dressed as highway maintenance workers, to identify motorists who disobey flagging personnel, speed through the work zone or violate the state's Move Over Law, which applies to both emergency and maintenance vehicles.

Additionally, the State Department of Transportation has already partnered with five local law enforcement agencies on separate "Operation Hardhat" initiatives in 2020, including the Utica Police Department, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Livingston County Sheriff's Office, Wyoming County Sheriff's Office, and the Schuyler County Sheriff's Office. Separately, these operations have resulted in 180 tickets issued to motorists, including tickets for speeding, seatbelt violations, cell phone/electronic device use, expired inspections, among other violations.

State Department of Transportation Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez said, "I can't thank our partners in law enforcement enough for the work they are doing to keep our DOT workers safe in highway work zones. At its core 'Operation Hardhat' is an education campaign designed to increase driver awareness as to the consequences of not following the rules of the road in a work zone. Our DOT workers will continue to be out there on our roadways working on projects large and small in the coming months - working to make New York's transportation system safer. We need all motorists to remember that our team works to keep you safe, so please, keep them safe - slow down and move over."

Thruway Authority Executive Director Matthew J. Driscoll said, "All we ask for is your undivided attention and a moment of your time so maintenance workers can go home unharmed at the end of their shifts. Thank you to our partners at the State Police for patrolling the Thruway and enforcing our work zones speed limits to protect the men and women of the Thruway Authority. These crews work hard every day so that drivers have a safe roadway to get to and from their destinations."

State Police Superintendent Keith M. Corlett said, "The New York State Police are committed to highway safety, and the safety and well-being of highway and construction workers as they improve the roadways of our state. Drivers should be aware, we will continue to aggressively enforce vehicle and traffic laws during this busy construction season. We ask all motorists to drive safely by obeying posted speed limits, moving over, and being cognizant of workers and equipment in highway work zones."

DMV Commissioner and Chair of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee Mark J.F. Schroeder said, "We want to ensure that our highways are as safe as possible for everyone, especially those workers doing maintenance, construction, or emergency operations. Avoid a senseless and preventable tragedy by obeying the speed limit and moving over when you encounter emergency vehicles and maintenance crews. A moment of inattention could lead to lifelong consequences—it's just not worth it."

Motorists are reminded to Move Over a lane, if safely possible, or slow down significantly whenever encountering roadside vehicles displaying red, white, blue, amber or green lights, including maintenance and construction vehicles in work zones.

Motorists are urged to slow down and drive responsibly in work zones. Fines are doubled for speeding in a work zone. Convictions of two or more speeding violations in a work zone could result in the suspension of an individual's driver license.

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