

MAY 6, 2021

Albany, NY

Governor Cuomo Announces 444 Tickets Issued by State Police and Local Law Enforcement During National Work Zone Awareness Week "Operation Hardhat"

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

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that New York State Police and another law enforcement agency issued 444 tickets during last week's Operation Hardhat, an initiative between law enforcement entities, 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. Operation Hardhat details were held in almost every region of New York State in support [of National Work Zone Awareness Week](#), which took place from April 26 to April 30. The enforcement and educational efforts come as New York State continues to experience a rising number of work zone intrusions, including three recent crashes that injured six highway workers just last week.

During Operation Hardhat, members of law enforcement patrol Department of Transportation and Thruway Authority work zones to enforce work zone speed limits and ensure that motorists are obeying flagging personnel.

"Our highway workers do vitally important work in often hazardous conditions so that we can all get where we need to go safely and with minimal delays," **Governor Cuomo said**. "Just last week, six highway workers in state work zones were sent to the hospital as a result of work zone crashes. I applaud all those who took part in Operation Hardhat and urge motorists to slow down and drive safely in work zones. New York State has zero tolerance for drivers who endanger our dedicated workforce."

The 444 tickets issued during Operation Hardhat last week included the following violations:

- Speeding - 81
- Seatbelts - 41
- Cell Phone - 135
- Failure to Move Over - 47
- Failure to Obey Traffic Control Device - 1
- Other violations - 139

Operation Hardhat details resulted in violations in almost every region of the state, including:

- Hudson Valley - 161
- Long Island - 59
- Capital Region - 53

- Central New York - 46
- Southern Tier - 44
- Mohawk Valley - 37
- Western New York - 26
- North Country - 18

The New York State Police conducted the majority of the Operation Hardhat details across the state. The Oneida County Sheriff's Office partnered with the State Department of Transportation during the week to stage a detail at a work zone near Kirkland, issuing 17 tickets. Earlier, on April 13, the State Police also held an Operation Hardhat detail along Interstate 490 in Monroe County, in the Finger Lakes Region, that resulted in 41 tickets being issued, including 19 for speeding.

Under "Operation Hardhat," police officers are present within the work zones, dressed as highway maintenance workers, to identify motorists who are distracted by electronic devices while driving, disobey flagging personnel, speed through the work zone or violate the state's Move Over Law, which applies to both emergency and maintenance vehicles. Additional details will be held throughout the construction season.

New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez said, "Operation Hardhat is an incredibly effective way to enforce work zone safety and I can't thank our partners in law enforcement enough for the work they are doing to help protect our transportation workers, who each day, face enormous hazards on the job. Those hazards were all too evident on April 27, when two members of the DOT family were hospitalized, one with critical injuries, following a vehicle collision in a work zone along Interstate 87 - a site that only a short time earlier had been the location of an Operation Hardhat detail. It's imperative that motorists put down their phones, pay attention and drive safely in highway work zones and show our transportation workers the respect they deserve."

New York State Thruway Authority Executive Director Matthew J. Driscoll said, "Already this construction season, there have been numerous incidents on New York State roads that put roadside crews in danger, including one that resulted in serious injuries to DOT workers. Initiatives such as Operation Hardhat promote awareness for work zone safety and it's crucial motorists make safety a priority when traveling in work zones. Lives depend on it. We thank our partners at New York State Police Troop T for keeping the Thruway safe and protecting the lives of motorists and our workers."

Acting State Police Superintendent Kevin P. Bruen said, "Law enforcement and other emergency responders, including highway workers, do their jobs each day in a dangerous environment, and risk their lives to keep the traveling public safe. Unfortunately, our Troopers have witnessed too many tragedies caused by reckless driving in work zones. Please, slow down, follow posted speed limits and put your phones down while you drive. Drivers are responsible for following the rules of the road, and violations of the Move Over Law and work zone intrusions will not be tolerated."

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.

Maintenance crews across the state work alongside fast-moving traffic each day, knowing their lives depend on drivers being alert, patient and cautious. It is critically important that motorists eliminate distractions, pay attention to driving and move over for workers.

During Work Zone Awareness Week, the Thruway Authority released shocking [video](#) of a work zone intrusion. On April 19, a Thruway maintenance crew was working on I-90 near Albany when a motorist entered the work zone and hit a Thruway maintenance truck. The crew had just returned to their vehicle moments before it was hit, and thankfully no one was injured.

As construction season begins, more maintenance and work crews will be out on the road performing repairs and improvements to ensure roads are safe for motorists. All travelers should be prepared to reduce speeds and to be alert when passing through work zones. Since 2000, National Work Zone Awareness Week has been recognized by the Federal Highway Administration. This year's theme is: "[Drive Safe. Work Safe. Save Lives.](#)"