



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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Kenosha County officials remind motorists to drive safely during this road construction season

With a new road construction season underway, Kenosha County urges drivers to slow down and pay attention in work zones.

The week of April 26-30, is Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, as designated by federal, state and local transportation agencies.

This year's theme — "Drive Safe. Work Safe. Save Lives." — is a fitting reminder to slow down and give construction crews a brake, said Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser.

"All of those orange barrels that we're starting to see sprouting up along our roadways are a reminder that men and women are at work in these areas, and it's our duty as drivers to do our part to keep them safe," Kreuser said. "That means putting down the phones, slowing down to work zone speed limits, and keeping our eyes out to avoid dangerous situations."

Wednesday, April 28, is "Go Orange Day," during which people are encouraged to wear something orange in support of highway safety. Social media pictures and posts using the #OrangeForSafety hashtag are welcome, but please always refrain from using electronics while driving, said Kenosha County Highway Director Clement Abongwa.

"There are a few things all of us can do to help," Abongwa said. "Those include avoiding distractions, obeying posted speed limits, expecting the unexpected, and making sure to be courteous and patient while driving."

In 2020 in Kenosha County, there were 62 work zone crashes resulting in 19 injuries, according to preliminary data from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Last year, even with reduced traffic volumes due to the pandemic, there was a Wisconsin work zone crash on average every 3.5 hours, the department stated.

Work zones include major construction and rehabilitation, maintenance, emergency response, utility work, municipal projects and more — any time when there are flashing lights, signs, barrels or workers on the road.

In Wisconsin, it is illegal to talk on a handheld cellphone while driving through a work zone. Fines begin at \$40, plus court costs.

“Following this law will protect you and the people working on the other side of the orange barrels,” Abongwa said.

Some more safety tips from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation:

- Eliminate distractions like eating, drinking, talking on the phone or fiddling with electronic devices.
- Expect the unexpected in work zones. Speed limits may be reduced, traffic lanes may be changed, and people and vehicles may be working near the road.
- Slow down. A vehicle traveling 60 mph travels 88 feet per second, and the faster you go, the longer it takes to stop.
- Give yourself room. Rear-end collisions are the most common work zone crashes, so do not tailgate.
- Look for signs. Orange, diamond-shaped signs usually give ample warning of lane closures, construction areas, and flaggers and other workers ahead.
- Be patient. If you don't see workers, that doesn't mean they're not there. Observe the signs until you see one that says you've left the work zone.
- Plan ahead. Leave early or map out an alternative route. Find the latest road conditions and work zone news at <https://511wi.gov>.
- Follow the law — slow down and move over, if possible, when you see flashing lights.
- Consider turning off your phone until you reach your destination.
- If you have to make a call, find a secure place to pull over and stop, such as a wayside or gas station.

Learn more at <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/safety/education/workzone/default.aspx>.

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