

Don't Get Caught In The CRUSH ZONE



Crush Zones Intrusion in a Work Zone – Tool Box Talk

DEPARTMENT: _____ DATE PRESENTED: ____/____/2009

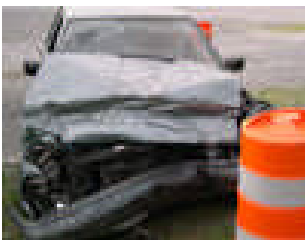


At one time or another, all drivers encounter the unfamiliar traffic patterns and hazards posed by roadway work zones. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) estimates that highway construction will increase to meet new capacity demands and to address the deteriorating highway infrastructure.

A highway worker or motorist is killed in a roadway construction zone every 8 hours. More than 50,000 Americans - enough to fill most major league baseball and football stadiums in the United States- are also injured in construction zone accidents each year.

More and more, distracted, speeding motorists are hitting workers building roads for new development, laying utility lines and paving, resurfacing or rebuilding roads and bridges that, with age and unlikely replacement, now need constant attention. **Each year nearly 6,000 crashes occur in New Jersey when road construction or workers are present.** Approximately 1,500 of these work zone crashes result in injury. A majority of work-zone crashes are rear end or same direction sideswipe collisions.

Several types of positive protection devices are currently available to enhance worker and motorist safety in construction areas. They include portable concrete barriers, ballast-filled barriers, and moveable concrete barriers, as well as shadow vehicles with truck-mounted attenuators, and vehicle arresting systems that prevent road users from entering a closed section of roadway. Each has unique characteristics and there are different construction site situations that can benefit from the use of one or more devices.



When an errant vehicle enters a section of closed roadway, the consequences may be extremely severe, because workers do not expect to encounter traffic. This risk may be even higher on nighttime projects. For such situations, the systems may be placed across the entire roadway at the closure point, as well as at any downstream ramps and other potential entrance points to physically prevent errant vehicles from entering the work space.

The updated regulations require agencies to establish policies, procedures, and/or guidance for the systematic consideration and management of road user and worker safety on Federal-aid highway projects. Specifically, the rule states that such items “**shall address the use of positive protection devices to prevent the intrusion of motorized traffic into the work space and other potentially hazardous areas in the work zone.**”