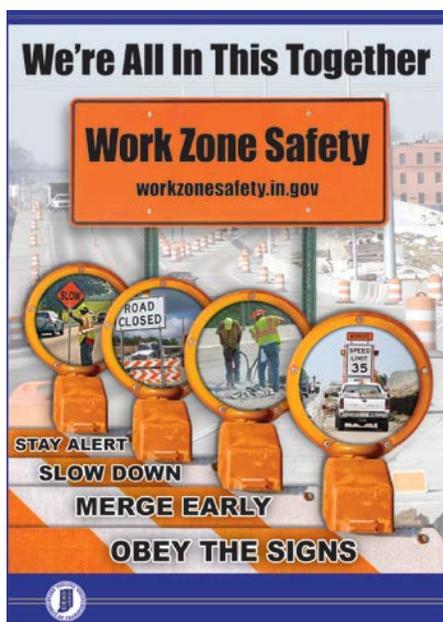


Work Zone Safety — We're All In This Together



The color for spring is orange — at least on the roadways as seen on barrels, barricades and cones — on display across the state as construction and maintenance work zone activity gears up. Our 2013 Goal No. 3 reinforces a work zone safety message, stating: “Improve INDOT’s work zone safety program and results.”

Many of us think of “work zones” as it relates to large construction projects, those that cost several million dollars and last for a construction season, or perhaps several construction seasons.

INDOT’s Fort Wayne Highway Maintenance Director Chuck Neuenschwander emphasizes maintenance work zones, in addition to construction work zones.

“Maintenance work zones are set up for activities like chip sealing a roadway, pavement patching, crack sealing, sweeping, guardrail repairs and sign maintenance, all performed by INDOT crews around the state,” said Neuenschwander. “These activities may last for a few

days, several hours, or less than one hour. Actually, the most common maintenance work zone is mobile, moving periodically or constantly.”

Statewide Safety Director Angela Smith and safety staff in the central office worked with many throughout the state to develop the work zone traffic control training. During the month of April, district safety directors conducted work zone training sessions for maintenance and survey crews. New and seasoned employees learned about safer work zone configurations.

“We are focusing on better training methods regarding work zone traffic controls this year,” said Smith. “Those items include flagging operations, vehicles and equipment, and signage and cone placement. From our audits last year, these are some of the specific areas we identified that could use improvement. Our training goal is for employees to have a complete understanding of each step involved in traffic control, and to apply workable concepts, techniques and appropriate principles and standards for all work zone situations. When this goal is achieved, we will have statewide standardization, recognition and uniformity with traffic control devices in our maintenance work zones.”

Maintenance work zone safety plans, at a minimum, take into consideration the complexity of work, duration of work, and traffic volume and composition. Additional considerations include community characteristics, economic impacts, length of work area and hazards associated with the work.

As a reminder, the “zero tolerance” policy is still in effect for INDOT employees to wear personal protection equipment and utilize seatbelts while on the INDOT clock.



Public Safety Operations Program Director Kim Peters works closely with one of our state agency partners, the Indiana State Police (ISP), in aiding to keep work zones safe.

“For this construction season, the state police will be adding six new white pickup trucks, for a total of nine trucks that will aid in work zones and other locations,” said Peters. “In 2012, a few districts used some of our ISP enforcement hours for maintenance work zones, mostly for high-volume interstate activities. This year, we have 1,500 dedicated hours for maintenance activities for district use to aid in keeping INDOT maintenance workers more safe, in addition to the 35,000 hours that will cover 35 construction projects.”

Work Zone Safety Section Engineer Pat McCarty and others continually explore new options to make work zones safer.

“We’re looking at a few new tools for the toolbox,” said McCarty. “One of those items is an automated flagger assistance device (AFAD), which allows a flagger to be off the road in a safer location and remotely controlling a device which displays either a STOP sign or a SLOW sign. Depending on the length of the work zone, the person controlling the device may be able to control the AFADs at both ends, freeing one potential flagger to work as part of the crew. The other item is removable rumble strips that are placed on the pavement before the work zone to alert motorists they are entering a work zone — and when the work is done, we move the strips to another site.”

McCarty said INDOT will be testing sequential flashing lights.

“These lights resemble those you see on an airport runway and will aid in getting motorists to merge earlier and slow down,” McCarty said. “Adding a motion component to these tapers will supplement the arrow boards. We will most likely begin by using these in construction work zones closing lanes at night.”

The latest truck-mounted attenuators (TMAs), which some say resemble boat trailers, have proven to be safe and cost efficient over the past several years. These metal deformation types either split or bend the metal rails to absorb the crash energy, and they meet the same crash test standards as other attenuators purchased years ago. Additionally, parts of these less costly TMAs can be re-used after a crash, saving more taxpayer dollars. Plans are to add 28 more TMAs by the end of June, to the 79 already in the fleet.

When driving through a work zone, remember the safety of your co-workers, and our partners in the construction industry, and other motorists. *We are all in this together.*

For more information about work zone safety, visit: workzonesafety.in.gov.

For safe driving tips, visit: www.in.gov/indot/2360.htm.