



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY: Prevention of work-related injuries & illnesses through research & investigation

ROADSIDE WORKERS AND TRAFFIC HAZARDS

Roads, from highways to quiet residential streets, can present serious and even life-threatening hazards for workers. The sight of highway work crews, and the risks posed by their jobs, are familiar to most drivers. However, many other industries and occupations involve working on or immediately nearby roadways, and can be just as dangerous and fatal:

- Emergency Vehicles
- Police Cars
- Garbage Trucks
- Landscaping Crews
- Mail/Parcel Delivery (USPS, FedEx, UPS, Amazon)
- School Bus/Transportation Drivers
- Utility crews (lineman, surveyors, general road maintenance)



These industries and occupations often **do not** have the same level of signage and overall driver recognition that highway work crews do.



ROADSIDE WORK ZONE FATALITY EXAMPLES

From 2001-2018, 39 workers have died as a result of being struck by a vehicle while working on or near roadways. The number by industry can be seen in Figure 1. While road or roadside construction, with 11 deaths, was the single largest contributor to the total, it only accounted for 28% of the deaths.

Examples of these deaths include:

- A road construction flagman was killed when struck by a vehicle that entered the work zone.
- A firefighter died after being struck by an out-of-control pickup on an icy road while responding to a motor vehicle collision.
- A garbage collector was struck by a car and killed when he exited his sanitation truck to cross the road.
- A police officer was struck by a vehicle while assisting with a traffic stop.
- A landscaping business owner was killed when he was struck by a vehicle while securing equipment to a trailer on the side of the road.
- A postal carrier was killed while delivering mail when his vehicle was struck from behind by another vehicle.
- A tow truck operator died after a vehicle struck the bus he was lifting onto his wrecker.

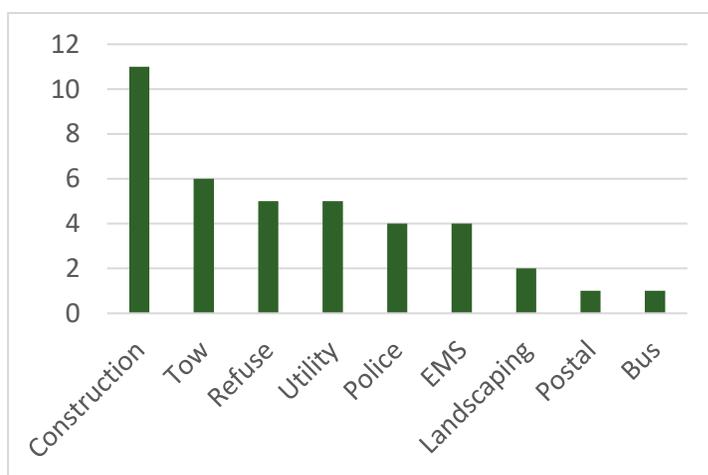


Figure 1: Number of workers struck by traffic while working roadside by sector, 2001-2018

PREVENTING ROADSIDE WORKER FATALITIES AND INJURIES

THE MICHIGAN MOVE OVER LAW

- The expanded Michigan Emergency Vehicle Caution Law, or “Move Over Law”, went into effect in February 2019
- Drivers are required to move over one lane and slow to 10mph below the posted speed limit whenever they encounter an “authorized vehicle” stopped on the side of the road
- Authorized vehicles include police and emergency response vehicles, solid waste collection vehicles, and utility and road maintenance vehicles (including tow trucks)
- Drivers can be fined up to \$400 for failing to comply, and up to 15 years in prison for killing a worker



It's the *Move Over* law

VISIBILITY

Make yourself as visible as possible! **Never assume a driver sees you!**

- ✓ **Wear high-visibility safety apparel (HVSA) (e.g. vest, bibs, coveralls).** Select an appropriate class of HVSA for work being performed
- ✓ **Maximize your vehicle's visibility** with headlights, hazard lights, other flashing lights, and/or reflective panels
- ✓ **Maximize work zone visibility** using road markers, lights, and/or flares when applicable
- ✓ **Be aware of blind spots and limited visibility** of workers/equipment operators in the work zone as well as motorists in active travel lanes.



PLAN

- ✓ **Develop standard procedures** for roadside work including the positioning of vehicles and workers relative to traffic and the use of HVSA's

DO NOT

- ✗ Assume drivers will give you the right of way
- ✗ Be distracted by phones or idle conversation when in a work zone
- ✗ Wear headphones or any other device that can diminish your hearing

RESOURCES

Much of OSHA's highway construction work zone resources are applicable to roadside hazards in different industries and on different roadway types

https://www.osha.gov/doc/highway_workzones/index.html

Sector-Specific Resources

Emergency Response Vehicles

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa_255f.pdf

Police

<https://www.nij.gov/topics/law-enforcement/officer-safety/roadside-safety/pages/welcome.aspx>

Mail/Parcel Delivery

<https://www.nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources/manuals/other/EL-814-November-2013-Postal-Employees-Guide-to-Safety.pdf> (pgs. 37-49)