

National Work Zone Awareness Week

This year's [National Work Zone Awareness Week](#) (NWZAW), observed April 11-15, is themed "Work Zones are a Sign to Slow Down". NWZAW is an annual campaign held at the start of construction season that encourages safe driving through highway work zones. The public awareness campaign was launched 22 years ago to encourage drivers to use extra caution in work zones and understand they play a role in keeping motorists and roadway workers safe.

Recent statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the Alabama Department of Transportation for work zones are as follows:

	2018	2019	2020	2021
National Fatal Crashes:	673	765	774	*
National Total Work Zone Fatalities:	757	845	857	*
Highway Workers Killed in WZ Crashes:	124	135	117	*
Alabama Work Zone Crashes:	3806	3134	2378	2349
Alabama Work Zone Fatalities:	28	19	19	17
Alabama Highway Workers Killed in WZ Crashes:	NA	3	2	2

* 2021 data is not available

Over the last decade, there has been an alarming increase nationally in work zone crashes and fatalities, reaching record highs in 2019 and 2020. Because of this disturbing trend, Senator Gerald Allen lead for a change in state law for fines for all traffic violations in work zones instead of just speeding. Since that change to the construction zone law was made, we have seen a small decline in work zone crashes and fatalities. We need that downward trend continue.

These statistics, even with slight decline with the change in state law, demonstrate the importance of NWZAW and spreading the message that everyone has a role in getting roadway workers home safely. The best means for emphasizing this critical need is to observe work zone speeds and eliminate distractions, such as cell phones, when driving through work zones.

Stressing the importance of being aware of surroundings in work zones, Skip Powe, Principal with SSR, said, "Construction and maintenance workers risk their lives each day on behalf of the public in order to build and maintain the roads and bridges we all need for our daily activities. They are real people. These men and women are husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, and friends and co-workers. They are little league coaches, team moms, Sunday school teachers, high school buddies... who, like everyone else, simply want to go home to their families each day when the shift is over. Their families need them, just like yours need you. Thus, ARBA, AGC, and AAPA urge motorists to be aware of our workers and give them the respect you would give your family members if they were working out there because these people are part of our family. We are tired of losing our family due to the carelessness and inattention to those who don't realize the impact of their driving decisions."

On behalf of the construction industry, Skip Powe, Principal of Smith Seckman Reid's (SSR) Alabama operations, is serving as NWZAW spokesman for the Alabama Road Builders Association (ARBA), AGC Alabama (AGC), and the Alabama Asphalt Pavement Association (AAPA). In addition, Morris King of Vulcan Materials Company (VMC) and his dog, Millie, are spearheading the message by the Mobile Section of AGC. Millie, a Labrador Retriever service dog, is somewhat of a local celebrity as she's been the subject of books about her therapy care for those in need. AGC Alabama recruited Morris and Millie to bring attention to motorists and workers to the importance of NWZAW and has tagged Millie as their "Work Zone Safety Dog". Morris, Millie, and Skip will be key industry contacts for the following scheduled NWZAW events:

- April 6th – **Montgomery:** 10:00 am press conference at the State Capitol with Senator Gerald Allen, Skip Powe, Morris King, and representatives from ALDOT and ALEA; [Alabama News Network NWZAW Capitol Press Conference](#), [WSFA NWZAW Capitol Press Conference](#).
- April 11th – **Work Zone Safety Training Day:** companies are encouraged to pause during the workday for safety demonstrations and/or discussions about safety policies and other prevention steps such as Tool Box Talks and Safety Meetings to make their employees aware of the importance of driving safely and undistracted through work zones and being alert and safe while working. Daily Tool Box talks are available on our website courtesy of **Safety Plus** at <http://theconstructioncenter.org/national-work-zone-awareness-week-april-11-15-2022/>.
- April 11th – **Mobile:** 1:30 pm interview on Sean Sullivan’s Midday Mobile FM Talk 106.5 with Morris King, Millie, and Skip Powe.
- April 12th – **Mobile:** 10:00 am press conference at the new SR-158 Seabury Creek Bridge with representatives from ALDOT, local law enforcement, Skip Powe, Morris King & Mille, Representative Shane Stringer, and Johnny & Kathy Walton of John G. Walton Construction Company. Press conference will conclude with the bridge dedication to Marshall J. Walton, son of Johnny & Kathy Walton, who was killed in a work zone on February 13, 2015.
- April 13th – **Wear Orange Day:** all roadway safety professionals across the country are encouraged to wear orange to proudly show their support of work zone safety. This is an important time to show support of the roadway safety industry, especially to the families of victims who have lost their lives in work zones. Individuals and companies are encouraged to post photos of Go Orange Day activities on social media using the hashtags #NWZAW, #WorkZoneSafety, and #Orange4Safety.
- April 13th – **Birmingham:** 9:00 am press conference on CR-52 (Morgan Road) widening project between the I-459 Overpass in Bessemer and the intersection of CR-2 (South Shades Crest Road) with representatives of ALDOT, Jefferson County, Keith Dillard of Alabama Guardrail/AGC, and Skip Powe.
- April 14th – **Social media storm:** everyone is asked to share messages about work zone safety and use hashtags #NWZAW and #WorkZoneSafety throughout social media between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. CT.
- April 15th – **Moment of Silence:** this is new for 2022, and companies are asked to pause and remember the people who lost their lives in a work zone incident.

To help communicate to drivers of the dangers of distracted driving and the need for work zone safety, AGC has a Work Zone Safety PSA that can be viewed at [Driving through Work Zones is NOT a GAME!](#) Please watch and share with your employees and on your social media platforms.

NWZAW was formed by the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and now includes many other national industry associations. In Alabama, NWZAW is coordinated by the Alabama Struck By Alliance, which is led by the Mobile Section of AGC Alabama and includes 19 industry associations such as ARBA, the Alabama Asphalt Pavement Association, ALDOT, and the Alabama County Commissioners Association. For more information concerning NWZAW, contact [Skip Powe](#).

For more information concerning NWZAW, please go to www.nwzaw.org, and <http://theconstructioncenter.org/national-work-zone-awareness-week-april-11-15-2022/>.