

Tear this out and share with your crew



SAFETY WATCH

by Marcia Gruver

Hazards of the road

Working in traffic is a two-pronged safety proposition: both you and the drivers coming at you need to be on high alert.

The accident: A worker was cutting concrete along the white center line of a four-lane highway. Orange reflective barrels closed the left lane to traffic, which was routed to a single lane. To accommodate the concrete cutting, three to four barrels had been moved into the active traffic lane, with a flagperson slowing down traffic and directing it slightly onto the berm area. An approaching semi truck exceeded the speed limit. The driver lost control of his vehicle and hit the guard rail. The truck bounced back from the guard rail through the barrels and struck the worker from behind, killing him.

The bottom line: It could seem easy to take a pessimistic view of work zone accidents – after all, half of the responsibility for making sure your time in traffic is incident free is in the hands of strangers – those driving around your work space. But you and your co-workers have just as significant of a responsibility in the effort to get you home safe and sound.



Illustration by Don Lomax

First, know the traffic control plan for your work area. Everyone in the work zone – including the drivers going around it – should be able to see and understand the routes they are to follow. These routes should be clearly marked with signs, traffic control devices, signals and message boards. These traffic control devices can include cones, barrels, barricades and delineator posts. In addition, there are various styles of concrete, water, sand, collapsible barriers, crash cushions and truck-mounted attenuators available to limit motorist intrusions into the construction work zone.

You also need to know your designated work areas – which areas have been deemed safe for construction activity. Make sure you stay within these areas. If at all possible when working close to on-coming traffic, try to face it when working. When you need to leave a designated work area, become especially alert of both types of traffic: the

traffic going around the site and the internal traffic inside the work zone, including dump trucks, graders, compactors and pavers.

If you've been given flagging duty, make sure you completely understand your job and are trained or certified. You should be visible from 1,000 feet, wearing high visibility clothing with a background of fluorescent orange-red or yellow-green and retroreflective material of orange, yellow, white, silver or yellow-green. Check the label on the reflective clothing – it should be a performance class 2 or 3. **EW**

Information for this Safety Watch was gathered from OSHA. It is meant for general information only; for more detailed information go to www.osha.gov. In addition, the American Road & Transportation Builders

Association is co-sponsoring a just released new version of the "Roadway Safety 8+" program, which now has spoken English, Spanish and Portuguese embedded in the software.