

# NEWS



# RELEASE

## OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 2, 2007**

## **ODOT Asks Motorists to Heed the Signs in Work Zones**

**LIMA – Charlie Weidel has worked for the Ohio Department of Transportation for 23 years as a project inspector alongside contractors in hazardous traffic conditions.**

**From his viewpoint and that of those he works with, getting out the message about National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, which is April 2-6, is vital.**

**“Anyone who’s worked on the highway has likely witnessed some kind of work zone incident,” said Weidel. The majority of the incidents he’s seen have involved rear-end accidents which often occur when motorists entering a zone do not heed the signs to slow down. “An orange and black sign means there is work ahead and workers on the roadway. Motorists need to pay attention to the signs which indicate their normal driving patterns may change,” he said.**

**According to the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA), the theme for this year’s work zone safety campaign is *Signs of Change*. The theme refers to the roadway advisory signs that warn motorists of several conditions found in roadway work zones and conveys the message that variance from the routine is, in itself, a potential hazard motorists should recognize.**

**There were 1,074 work zone fatalities in the U.S. in 2005. That figure compares with 1,068 in 2004 and 1,028 in 2003. The vast majority of these fatalities are motorists, not the workers themselves.**

**“We feel it is important to communicate the message of work zone safety for the sake of our people and that of the motorists passing through our zones,” said Tim Burkepile, Ohio Department of Transportation District 1 deputy director. “The work that takes place on area highways is for the good of everyone and we ask for caution, cooperation and patience from the public as we carry out this important work,” said Burkepile.**

**To do their part, when driving in work zones, motorists can increase safety by following these guidelines:**

- **Stay alert and give driving your full attention.**
- **Follow all posted signs and obey flaggers.**
- **Don’t tailgate or speed; Most crashes in work zones are rear-end collisions.**
- **Expect the unexpected; Work zones are changing environments.**
- **Be aware that normal traffic patterns may be shifted.**

