



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 3, 2017

Wolf Administration, PennDOT, Pa. Turnpike Commission, Association of Pennsylvania Constructors Promote Work Zone Safety, Host Statewide Workers' Memorial

Harrisburg, PA-- The Wolf Administration, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and the Association of Pennsylvania Constructors today gathered to kick off Work Zone Safety Awareness Week – which runs through April 7 and honor lives lost – by hosting PennDOT's statewide Workers' Memorial in Harrisburg.

"Work zone safety continues to be a top priority of the department," PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards said. "We all hope to help change driver behavior and raise awareness so all of us, highway workers and motorists alike, get home safely every day."

Preliminary PennDOT data shows that 16 people were killed in work-zone crashes in 2016, seven fewer than in 2015. Additionally, there were 2,075 crashes in work zones last year, an increase from 1,935 crashes in 2015. Over the last five years, there was an average of 1,872 crashes and more than 20 fatalities in work zones.

In addition to crash data from police reports, PennDOT monitors work-zone safety with internal reports. In 2016, there were 102 intrusions in PennDOT work zones. Of those work-zone intrusions, 16 resulted in injuries to PennDOT employees, 39 caused damage to PennDOT fleet or equipment, and 55 did not result in injury or damage but had the potential to do so.

As of March 27 this year, there have been nine work-zone intrusions, with zero resulting in employee injury, four causing damage to vehicles or equipment and five causing no damage or injuries.

Over the years, more than 30 PA Turnpike workers have died on the job, and many of these tragedies were caused by driver mistakes like speeding or distraction.

"The winter is hopefully behind us, so PA Turnpike maintenance forces are resuming standard operations this week, focusing on upkeep tasks that make the road safer for customers," said PA Turnpike Chief Operating Officer Craig Shuey. "So, we urge drivers to be on the lookout for orange cones and yellow vests, and we remind drivers that state police will be on the lookout for work-zone speeders."

Shuey said highway maintenance and construction workers aren't the only victims of careless driving in work areas. "Oftentimes, occupants of the at-fault vehicle are injured or even killed during work zone crashes. That's why we are reminding drivers that ending work-zone casualties is a collaborative effort."

Pennsylvania law states that anyone violating the posted speed limit by more than 5 mph will face doubled fines. The fine is determined based on the amount the driver is traveling over the speed limit. Governor Wolf signed a law in 2016, that says any driver who causes serious bodily injury within a work zone could face up to \$5,000 in fines and a six-month license suspension. A driver causing a death within a work zone would face up to a \$10,000 fine and one-year license suspension.

In addition, drivers who don't turn on their headlights in posted work zones face a \$25 fine.

"Work zones present safety challenges, not only to construction crews, but to travelers," said Robert Latham, executive vice president of Associated Pennsylvania Constructors. "According to the Federal Highway Administration, 85 percent of work zone fatalities are travelers, not workers. The remedy is simple – just slow down and pay attention."

Since 1970, 87 PennDOT employees have died in the line of duty. For more information on work zone safety visit, penndot.gov/safety. Join the discussion on social media by using #Slow4Zone and #NWZAW.

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