

## Springtime Has its Own Driving Hazards

Finally, the days are getting longer and the temperatures are rising. That long, cold winter is just about behind us. But, after the constant plowing, salting, and sanding, and the aftermath of temperature-driven frost-heaves, our roads are bruised and battered. Potholes, blocked and clogged catch basins, and broken guardrails are just some of winter's casualties. Until repairs are made, these conditions are road hazards.

The annual ritual of roadway maintenance and repairs is about to begin, with orange being the color of the season. We will see orange everywhere in the form of temporary roadwork warning signs, trailer-mounted light boards, traffic safety cones, safety vests, and flaggers. This is all for a good reason – safety. Ongoing highway maintenance adjacent to open traffic lanes is dangerous to the workers and motorists alike. The typical ten-minute drive can become twenty or thirty minutes once road repairs are underway.

Drivers should really pay attention to construction warnings on the roads. Sometimes these signs are set a long distance from the actual work-site. Not seeing any activity ahead, a driver might not pay any attention to them. But, drivers who suddenly round a bend at high speed and come upon a street-sweeper, dump truck, or perhaps a piece of heavy equipment in their lane or entering it, may lose control when they brake quickly and forcefully. Drivers who don't see or who ignore warning signs, and crash into work areas are a leading cause of death for on-the-job highway construction workers. It is not safe for motorists either; passenger vehicles and light trucks usually finish a distant second in contests with heavy equipment.

We urge everyone to heed all orange warnings and instructions while passing through a construction zone, to be patient and courteous, and to slow down. It makes no sense for drivers to become aggravated or angry at construction slow-downs or delays. Drivers seldom gain any time by taking unnecessary chances in a work zone. And taking risk often results in more lost time for the hurried driver – such as when stopped by a police officer or being in an accident – and all that just to save a minute or two at the most. A driver is far better off to relax and “go with the flow.” By following the tips below, you will reduce your chances of being involved in a highway work zone accident.

- **Expect the unexpected:** Normal speed limits may be reduced, traffic lanes may be narrower or moved, and people and equipment may be working on or near the road. At night, bright work lights may impair visibility.
- **Slow down:** Speeding is one of the major causes of work zone crashes.
- **Don't tailgate:** Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you. The most common accident in a highway work zone is the rear-end collision.
- **Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and all construction workers and their equipment.**
- **Pay attention to the warning signs:** The signs are there to help you and other drivers move safely through the work zone. Observe the posted signs until you see the one that says you've left the work zone.
- **Obey road crew flaggers:** The flag person knows what is best for moving traffic safely within the work zone. Flag persons have the same authority as regulatory signs, so you can be cited for disobeying their directions.
- **Stay alert and minimize distractions:** Dedicate your full attention to the roadway and avoid changing radio stations or using cell phones while driving in a work zone.
- **Keep up with the traffic flow:** Motorists can help maintain traffic flow and posted speeds by merging into the proper lane as soon as possible. Don't drive right up to a lane closure and then try to barge in.
- **Schedule enough time to drive safely; check radio, TV, and websites for traffic information:** Expect delays, and leave early so you can reach your destination on time, safely.
- **Be patient and stay calm:** Work zones aren't there to inconvenience you. Remember, the repair crew is working to improve the road to make your future drive safer and better. Help them by driving with respect.

*The risk prevention information and advice presented in this brochure are intended only to advise our insureds and their managers of a variety of methods and best practice strategies based on generally accepted practices for controlling potentially loss producing situations commonly occurring in business premises and/or operations. The recommendations and information contained herein are not intended to warrant that all potential hazards or conditions have been evaluated or can be controlled. This guide is not intended as an offer to write insurance coverage for such conditions or exposures, or to imply that Alteris will write such coverage. The liability of Alteris is limited to the specific terms, limits and conditions of the insurance policies issued.*