

TOO MANY MOTORISTS

DON'T GET THE PICTURE.



What if the orange and black signs that silently warn motorists of highway conditions and hazards could come to life and speak?

What messages would they have for us?

Recognizing that thousands of lives have been lost in work zone crashes – with the deaths mounting at a rate of two per day – the signs would shout out: "Caution!" "Slow down!" "Pay attention!"

Some 25,000 serious injuries occur in work zones each year. Understanding and following the warnings of the orange and black highway signs is an important mission for all of us. The pictures and symbols on the signs are too important to

ignore. It's time to "get the picture." Special traffic conditions in and around work zones call for greater caution, speed reduction and greater alertness.



GET THE PICTURE

IN LIVING COLORS ORANGE AND BLACK

Work zones can appear anywhere, from major freeways to two-lane country roads. Regardless of the setting, when construction or repair result in the creation of a work zone, special advance markings are necessary to warn motorists of special conditions such as:

- Reduced speed limits
- Changes in traffic flow
- Changes in lanes
- Workers and construction equipment operating on or near the road.

These conditions are most often signaled by diamond-shaped orange and black warning signs. In addition, they also communicate distances to work areas and the proper steps necessary to proceed safely. Often, a worker designated as a flagger will be posted to control work zone traffic or provide other directions to motorists. Whether through signs, workers or electronic signals, the message is the same: Slow down. Be alert. Proceed with caution.

SEE ORANGE, NOT RED

Work zones are no place for impatience or aggressive driving. After all, work zones are there because road conditions are being improved or roads are being expanded or modified to create better, faster or more convenient transportation routes for everyone. The added seconds or minutes that may result while passing

through a work zone represent a very small "price" to pay for years of safer driving. It's also worth remembering that the signs and other directions given at work zones are intended to get you, your family and motorists around you to your home, work and other destinations as quickly and safely as possible.

500 FEET

1000 FEET

1500 FEET

HOW LONG IS A THOUSAND FEET?

Whether marked with one or all of these "distance" signs, the message is to begin to prepare for conditions ahead--NOW--not 500 or 1500 feet from now. That's particularly important when we consider how quickly those feet pass. At 60 miles per hour, for instance, it takes less than eleven and one-half seconds to travel 1000 feet. Even motorists approaching at a reduced speed of 40 miles per hour will travel those thousand feet in just a fraction over seventeen seconds. That's not a lot

of time, but it is sufficient if you respond to these signs on sight and immediately begin to anticipate the possible conditions you may soon encounter. And, of course, it's time to slow down and remain cautious and alert.

"HONOR" THE FLAGGER

This common work zone sign is a "picture" or symbol of a flagger. Unfortunately, not everyone "gets the picture." The message is simple. The symbol means that a flagger is ahead directing traffic in the work zone. When you see this sign, it's time to be

cautious, be alert to conditions around you, slow down and watch for other directions or information. Often, this sign is accompanied by other orange and black signs, including such information as distance to the work zone.



PLEASE MAKE THIS A HAPPY "ENDING"

Do you know the meaning of these signs? They mean that a lane is about to end, requiring you to merge into the adjacent lane. The "bent" line indicates which lane is ending. Since changing lanes -- whether in or out of work zones-- is one of the most common maneuvers associated with vehicle crashes, understanding and following these signs is of great importance. When you see this sign, it's time to begin taking action, whether you're in a lane that is ending or a through lane. Both lanes are affected,



and both require responsible -- and courteous -- driving. If you're in the lane that is ending, begin by signaling your move. Next, carefully use your side-view and rearview mirrors to determine when you can safely enter the adjacent lane. Check blind spots. When there is a safe distance between vehicles, carefully complete your lane change. Drivers in the through lane share in the responsibility of safe lane-changing and merging. Be a safe and courteous driver by making room for the driver merging into the through lane. Be a safe driver and a good citizen. Make your lane changes with care, and help others do the same.

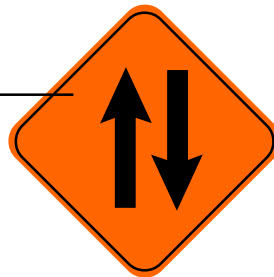


OTHER "SIGNS" OF CAUTION...



Warns of unusual driving conditions ahead, which may include lane closures, rough driving surfaces, large equipment parked on the shoulder or moving in and out of traffic, and workers in or near traffic lanes. Drivers should anticipate slow downs. Be alert and drive carefully.

Warns you that traffic is traveling in both directions on a roadway that is normally one way. Be alert for oncoming traffic and stay in your lane.



Tells you to carefully resume your normal, safe driving speed.

Warns you which lane is closed ahead and how far ahead. This gives you the opportunity to merge into the open lane. Be courteous. Switch lanes when you see this sign.



GET THE PICTURE. LISTEN TO THE SIGNS.



It's time to put an end to the tragic loss of life and senseless injury brought about by work zone crashes. The signs, and the warnings they convey in pictures, words and graphics are in place wherever there is a work zone construction project underway. But signs alone cannot prevent disaster. It's every motorist's job to pay attention to the signs and "listen" to their important messages. Messages that say, "Slow Down!" "Stay Alert!" "Drive with Caution!" Get the picture? Great!

GET THE PICTURE. LISTEN TO THE SIGNS.

