

Missouri Department of Transportation

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MoDOT concerned over alarming rise in work zone and TMA crashes

JEFFERSON CITY—As the state attempts to return to normal amid the global pandemic, the Missouri Department of Transportation is dealing with a surge in work zone crashes despite decreased traffic volumes.

MoDOT has already had 39 truck/trailer-mounted attenuators hit in work zones across the state this year. That compares with 19 hits at this time in 2019. Attenuators are like giant, crushable shock absorbers which absorb momentum and reduce the force of the impact. Damage to drivers and vehicles involved is lessened.

“We’ve had a 100% increase in TMA hits at a time when traffic on Missouri roads has decreased by nearly 50% for much of the year,” said MoDOT Director Patrick K. McKenna. “That’s not only an overwhelming figure, it’s also completely avoidable with appropriate driver attention.”

“Distracted driving has been recognized as a major factor in work zone crashes,” said Nicole Hood, state highway safety and traffic engineer. “Since 2014, cell phone related crashes in MO have increased by 35%. Using a cellphone in a car is potentially one of the most dangerous actions you can take while driving.”

Any time highway workers are present on a Missouri roadway – whether it’s a long-term lane closure, a moving operation, or shoulder work – your safety and the safety of those workers depends on drivers’ focus and attention. Since 2012, the state [Slow Down and Move](#)



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[Over law](#) requires motorists to slow down and change lanes when approaching MoDOT vehicles or law enforcement and emergency vehicles with lights flashing. Failure to do so is a Class A misdemeanor and can result in fines and/or imprisonment.

To further underscore the importance of driving safely in work zones, last year Gov. Mike Parson signed “Lyndon’s Law,” to revoke the driver’s license of anyone who hits a highway or utility worker in a work zone or an emergency responder in an emergency zone. Lyndon Ebker was a 30-year employee of MoDOT when he was hit and killed in a Franklin County work zone by a distracted driver in 2016.

“Operating a motor vehicle—whether it is an 18-wheel commercial transport or the family sedan—is a full-time job,” McKenna said. “Road conditions can change in a heartbeat. We don’t want that heartbeat to be the last—either for you or our workers.”

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