

WSDOT highlights work zone safety with memorial and techniques being developed to increase safety

Local News

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OLYMPIA - On April 23, WSDOT will recognize the more than 5,000 WSDOT workers and the thousands of city, county and contractor crews working to improve Washington's roadways, and the risks they face every day.

Just days later, WSDOT will launch the second activation of its newest work zone safety device, the [Automated Traffic Safety Camera](#).

"Speed continues to be the leading cause of work zone collisions. So we are asking drivers to slow down and pay attention when driving through work zones," said WSDOT Secretary Paula Hammond. "The men and women who work on our state and local highways are often working in and near traffic, and we want everyone to go home to their loved ones at the end of their work day."

The [Work Zone Memorial](#) is an annual ceremony to recognize roadway workers and honor those who have lost their lives in work zones. The ceremony begins at 10 a.m. Thursday, April 23 at the WSDOT Building, 310 Maple Park Ave. SE in Olympia. The public and media are invited to attend.

In addition to the ceremony, WSDOT has turned its popular web site, <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>, orange for the week. Also, a portion of the Headquarters building was covered in orange, and WSDOT employees throughout Washington are encouraged to wear orange on April 23.

WSDOT's most recent worker fatality was in 2002, but sadly, four contractor workers lost their lives in the past two years working on WSDOT projects. WSDOT will submit these four names for inclusion on the [National Work Zone Memorial Wall](#), which happens to be at WSDOT's Headquarters Building for the 2009 WSDOT Work Zone Memorial.

There were more than 10,500 work zone collisions reported between 2000 and 2008. More than 6,000 of these collisions resulted in injuries, including 59 fatalities. The majority of the deaths and injuries were to vehicle drivers and passengers.

One of the newest ways WSDOT is attempting to reduce speeds through the work zone is an [automated traffic safety camera](#), which will be on display as a part of the Work Zone Memorial ceremony.

WSDOT used these cameras successfully in a Lewis County work zone last fall. WSDOT will deploy the device in the I-5 work zone south of Olympia ([Grand Mound to Maytown](#)) on Monday, May 4.

The camera is mounted in a small sport utility vehicle parked in an active work zone. An operator checks the equipment and then the speed radar and camera goes to work, catching the rear license

plate of vehicles speeding through the work zone.

In the Lewis County work zone, more than 90 percent of drivers were traveling below 70 mph during the five-week camera activation (September-October 2008).

The cameras are part of WSDOT's "[Give 'Em A Brake](#)" program, to promote the protection of workers out on the job. You can also give yourself and your passengers a break by driving carefully in the work zone. Remember that it takes approximately 200 feet for you to stop your car when traveling at 60 mph.

Tips for Driving in a Work Zone:

*Observe the speed limit and don't do anything except drive while you're in the work zone.

*Don't eat or drink.

*Don't change CD's or radio stations.

*Don't tailgate! Leave plenty of room between you and the vehicle in front of you.

To read more facts and tips on driving through a work zone, please visit our "[Give 'Em A Brake](#)" Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/Safety/Brake/.