



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION **NEWS RELEASE**

2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE P.O. BOX 317546 NEWINGTON CONNECTICUT 06131-7546

FOR RELEASE: Upon Receipt

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
TELEPHONE: (860) 594-3060
Fax: (860) 594-3066
HOME-PAGE: www.dot.state.ct.us

CONNECTICUT KICKS OFF WORK ZONE SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK

NEWINGTON, Conn. - The Connecticut Department of Transportation is joining other national transportation organizations across the country to promote the annual Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, April 2-8, 2006.

Department of Transportation Deputy Commissioner Charles Urso, along with Public Safety Commissioner Leonard Boyle, will conduct a press conference to be held at **10:30 am on Wednesday, April 5, 2006 at the Southington DOT Rest Area on I-84 eastbound between exits 28 and 30.** Federal, state, and municipal officials along with representatives of the construction industry and utility companies will join the Commissioners to highlight the week in Connecticut.

With nearly a 50% increase in work zone fatalities between 1997 and 2004, work zone safety is a growing roadway safety concern. Some facts you should know. In the year 2004:

- One work zone fatality occurred every 8.2 hours (3/day). That's a highway worker or motorist killed in a roadway construction zone and more times than not, the fatality was the motorist not the highway worker.
- One work zone injury every 9 minutes (160/day). That's more than 50,000 people injured in road construction zones in one year- enough to fill most major league baseball and football stadiums in the United States.

Connecticut's new campaign theme, "**Don't Zone Out – Pay Attention or Pay Double**" emphasizes the importance of motorists and workers to pay attention when driving or working on the road. Connecticut statistics indicate that the highest percentage of work zone crashes is rear end collisions with the most common contributing factor being following too close.

What does this mean to a motorist? You need to focus on driving and be aware of your surroundings. Slow down as you approach and drive through work zones. Always expect the unexpected.

For highway workers, out of the 1,374 fatal highway incidents recorded in 2004, 25% were work zone related. As a worker on the road, you need to remember where you are at all times, stay aware, and always use high visibility safety gear and proper traffic control devices.

The first National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, which was held in April 2000, was created by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Federal Highway Administration, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and the American Traffic Safety Services Association. The MOU created a partnership among the state and federal governments and the construction industry.

The objective of Work Zone Safety Awareness campaign is to ensure that all workers in work zones can do their jobs safely, and all motorists can travel through work zones safely. To help motorists navigate safely through work sites, the Connecticut Department of Transportation offers the following tips:

- Expect the unexpected!
- Slow down!
- Don't tailgate!
- Pay attention!
- Obey traffic persons!
- Stay alert!
- Be patient and stay calm!
- Remember -- the work zone crew members are working to improve your future ride!