# WORK ZONE SAFETY Talking Points: CALIFORNIA

**The Importance of Work Zone Safety in California**

* California has a large and complex roadway system with over 175,589 miles of public roads[[1]](#footnote-1) encompassing diverse environments and providing mobility for nearly 27 million licensed drivers and millions of pedestrians and bicyclists.
* California has the fifth largest economy in the world; these public roads are the state’s foundation in reliably moving people and goods from one place to another.
* From 2012-2021, California has seen 146 fatal work zone crashes involving a CMV[[2]](#footnote-2).
* And in 2020, 15% of fatal work zone crashes in California involved a CMV[[3]](#footnote-3).
* Beyond crashes involving a CMV, California saw 1,893 fatal or serious injury crashes in work zones between 2008 and 2017, resulting in 575 fatalities and 1,634 serious injuries[[4]](#footnote-4).

**Sharing the Road**

* Work zones present challenges for truck drivers across California – narrowed lanes, sudden stops, traffic pattern shifts, and uneven road surfaces can lead to crashes and fatalities if they are not prepared and alert. Plan your route, reduce speed, stay alert, and do your part while traveling through California work zones.
* On average, large trucks are overrepresented in work zone crashes. In 2019, over 33% of fatal crashes involved commercial motor vehicles (CMV)[[5]](#footnote-5).
* Large blind spots, long stopping distances, and size constraints make maneuvering large trucks and buses in work zones particularly challenging. Passenger vehicles should be mindful that CMV drivers need to take extra precaution when driving through these areas.
* Pay close attention to road workers and flaggers – give them extra room, always slow when approaching them, and be prepared to stop if necessary.

**How to Drive Safely Through Work Zones**

* There are plenty of resources available to research your routes and check for upcoming work zones. Make sure you know of any road work before embarking on your route and when possible, use detours to avoid having to pass through these areas.
* Reduce speed while traveling through California work zones, paying close attention to signs and signals.
* Be aware of passenger vehicle drivers around you, who may not be aware of commercial vehicle driving challenges, including large blind spots and longer stopping distances.
* Be prepared to stop or slow unexpectedly, and when doing so, activate emergency flashers to alert vehicles behind you.
* When approaching lane closures, move into the open lane as soon as possible – pay close attention to vehicles around you that could be in your blind spot.
* Rear-end crashes are common in work zones – obey all speeds, avoid distractions, and maintain extra space between your vehicle and the one in front of you at all times.

**California’s Active Work Zones**

* The top three California roadways with the most CMV-involved fatal crashes include I-10 (LA area), I-5 (Kern county), and SR-99 (Kern County), accounting for 57% of all CMV-involved fatal work zone crashes[[6]](#footnote-6). As you travel through California, it’s critical for all drivers – both CMV and passenger vehicle drivers – to share the road safely, particularly as they approach or enter work zones.
* Your 2023 work zone hot spots include:
	+ **Northern California**: Heavy construction zones in San Francisco and San Jose, area
	+ **State Route (SR) 1/US 101:** North and south bound throughout the state
	+ **SR 99:** North and south bound throughout the state
	+ **Greater Los Angeles area**: I-5, I-10, I-15, I-110, I-405, and many others

**Where to get more information**

* The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) provides work zone safety [shareable materials](https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/ourroads/work-zone-safety-shareable-material) and [safety tips](https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/ourroads/work-zones-safety-tips) on the *Our Roads, Our Safety®* website.
1. CA Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2020-2024 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. National Work Zone Information Clearinghouse [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. National Work Zone Information Clearinghouse [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. CA Strategic Highway Safety Plan [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. FARS 2019 Annual Report File, NHTSA [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. FARS 2019 Annual Report File, NHTSA [↑](#footnote-ref-6)