

# Work Zone Safety Guidelines

Each year there are nearly 800 fatalities and over 37,000 serious injury crashes in the more than 70,000 work zones along the nation's roads and highways. A work zone is any type of roadwork that affects traffic conditions. Many work zones involve lane closures and may also be on the shoulder or on the median. Utility or construction company workers, while in the work zone, face the greatest exposure from oncoming motorists.



*Speeding is the number one cause of accidents in a construction work zone. Most states now double the fine for speeding in a work zone.*

For the purpose of these guidelines, the term work zone will apply to more than just highway construction areas. Any time your electronic news gathering (ENG) van, remote production unit (RPU), outdoor advertisement truck, crane, or any other broadcast-related vehicle is pulled onto the shoulder of the road, or is obstructing the normal flow of traffic, you could be creating a work zone hazard. You must take safety measures to protect yourself, your co-workers, the general public, and your equipment.

*Although the vehicle here appears to be in a designated parking space, it is actually parked on a busy downtown street, one of the main arteries leading out of the city. Also pictured is the safety triangle that we'll be going into more detail about in these guidelines.*



OSHA, along with DOT and state highway administrations, has been working to better understand the hazards and problems associated with roadside work and work zones. OSHA has recently cited media companies for not providing protection for employees while parked in the work zone. Specifically, the OSHA standards on requiring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), 29 CFR 1910.132 and 29 CFR 1926.28, are frequently cited when employees face a potential exposure, in this case to vehicular traffic, and when warning vests with reflective materials are not used. Failing to adhere to these OSHA standards endangers employees, in addition to causing citations that can lead to substantial fines and penalties.

Anytime your vehicle is parked in a designated parking space (lined parking space or along the curb), PPE and reflective triangles are not necessary, unless you are obstructing the normal traffic flow by opening doors to unload equipment, etc. In non-

designated parking spaces, such as the shoulder of the road, the van operator/photographer must wear the reflective vest, along with any other employee potentially exposed. Also, the reflective triangles are to be placed on the side closest to the traffic flow and 25 feet behind the vehicle or the front of the vehicle, depending on the traffic flow. This approximate spacing gives ample warning for approaching motorists.

Parking and obstructing traffic in any manner should only be used as a last resort. Anytime a vehicle – and especially a broadcast-related vehicle – is blocking traffic, motorists will be gawking and rubber-necking, which can lead to accidents, injuries, and vehicle/equipment damage. The news event that is being covered, in addition to the work being performed, weather conditions, and time of day are further distractions for motorists and for yourself.

*The motor vehicle safety work zone/emergency kit, pictured here, provides the basic safety tools to protect you in the work zone. Each kit includes two orange reflective vests, two reflective triangles, and two emergency safety light flares. Everything is packaged in a bright orange case for easy storage and visibility. However, because of the compact size of this kit, it is very important that the driver and each passenger in the vehicle be aware of the location of the safety kit for quick and easy retrieval.*



The safety vest is the single most important article of personal protective equipment that is worn in a work zone. Any dirty, faded vests should be discarded and immediately replaced.



*The safety vest gives added protection, even during a bright, sunny day. The stress and time constraints of covering a story can cause a lapse in even the most safety-conscious individuals, so always take the few seconds to put on the vest. As mentioned earlier, OSHA has already cited media companies for not providing employees with personal protective equipment, such as the safety vest.*

The safety light flares and safety triangles are extremely useful in making your vehicle visible to passing motorists, particularly in an emergency. The triangles also offer a barrier of sorts to protect you and your equipment from oncoming traffic. The safety triangles are folded for easy storage and transport.

The reflective safety triangles are used to direct the flow of traffic around you and your parked vehicle and also to create a safety work zone for you to unload equipment, etc. This provides a restricted area in which to work and gives a warning to other vehicles of your presence. The first triangle should be placed three to four feet from the side and behind the vehicle, leaving enough room to open the door and retrieve the equipment, without the triangle creating a tripping hazard. The second triangle would be placed approximately 25 feet centered behind the back bumper. With the dark clothing worn by the technician, it's very easy to understand the importance of wearing the reflective vest.



Triangle 1

Triangle 2

To assemble the safety triangles, follow the instructions pictured below.

Raise the right side of the triangle, which is the longer side with the red reflective extension piece. Raise the left side of the triangle, snapping the "U" shaped piece on the right side into the tab on the left side.



Once the triangle has been assembled, it should be turned on the base to provide better stability. Raise the metal rod, squeeze together, and slide into the hole at the top of the triangle. Under normal conditions, the weighted base will prevent the triangle from tipping over.

For additional safety, especially in emergencies or inclement weather, place the safety light flares in front of the reflective triangles. Many motorists won't think twice about clipping a triangle, but they will show more respect for a flare.

To further increase visibility to oncoming motorists, all vehicles in the work zone should have their daytime running lights and/or headlights on at all times.

*Reflective decals and tape are very beneficial when used on vehicles, clothing, and equipment, such as cameras, tripods, etc. As illustrated in this picture, the tape can be placed on the back bumper and the inside door jamb.*



The main points from these guidelines can be summarized as follows:

- When parking your vehicle, attempt to find the safest location for unloading passengers and equipment. If you are in a designated parking space, the safety measures listed here are not applicable. In addition, if you will be raising the mast on an ENG vehicle or the crane on an advertising vehicle, take the time to check the location of overhead power lines. (See ***Eye On...ENG Vehicle Safety.***)
- The safety vest should be worn while unloading equipment and during the entire time while in the established work zone.
- Safety triangles should be placed at 25-foot intervals in the back or front of the vehicle, depending on traffic flow. The safety light flares should only be used in emergencies or during inclement weather.

Each employee who operates, rides, or works in or around an ENG or RPU vehicle, outdoor advertisement truck, crane, or any other broadcast-related vehicle must be aware of and trained regarding Work Zone Safety. They should be knowledgeable about when to wear the safety vest; how to assemble the safety triangles and where they should be placed in relation to the vehicle and oncoming traffic; and where and when the safety flares should be used.

The safety of all employees is our greatest concern. We are confident that following the procedures contained in these guidelines will help to ensure that safety. If you have any questions or require additional information, please call Mark Perriello of Environmental Affairs on 412-642-5055.