

Deadline approaches for North Carolina Work Zone Safety Training Standard

As drivers, we all share in the safety of highway work zones. But **effective July 1, 2010**, workers controlling traffic in and around these work zones have a new standard to meet. North Carolina joins a growing list of states that will require all flaggers to be trained in a course approved by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

The reasons are simple. Controlling traffic through work zones is one of the most important and dangerous operations in today's road construction and maintenance. There are more than 200 major work zones right now in North Carolina, and countless short-term disruptions of traffic on state roads. The tragic result is a growing number of injuries and fatalities in work zones and other temporary traffic control areas for utility, municipal, and construction work.

In 2008, there were nearly 2,400 work zone crashes in North Carolina. These crashes resulted in 1,463 injuries and 21 deaths. Nationally, there are 3 deaths every day and an injury every 9 minutes taking place in a construction or maintenance work zone. While most of these victims are motorists who have been speeding and/or distracted from their driving responsibility, flaggers and other workers are especially vulnerable to injury and death. Ironically, the vast majority of these preventable crashes happened on dry roads, in clear daytime conditions.

Responses to the problem have focused on the motorist—public awareness campaigns and stricter law enforcement in and around work zones. The penalty for a driver convicted of speeding in a North Carolina work zone is now \$250.00, in addition to significant insurance premium increases and driver's license penalty points. But there is much more to be done, and the focus to improve safety is by having *workers* comply with higher standards of work zone traffic control.

The good news is that the National Safety Council Flagger Training Course meets the NCDOT requirements and has been approved. Our four hour Flagger course also meets the federal requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the ANSI standard ISEA-107-1999, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). If you conduct flagging operations, you can become a certified instructor in our course and train your employees at your convenience. Of course, as a valued NSC member, you receive substantial discounts on the Instructor Development Course (held in Charlotte and Raleigh) as well as discounts on the student materials.

So don't delay! Visit www.ncdot.org/~workzone for more information or www.safetync.org to register for the Instructor Development Course.