

Enhancing Work Zone Safety (WZS): Saving Road Construction Worker's Lives

Introduction to NAPA: The National Asphalt Pavement Association (NAPA) is the lone trade association representing over 1,000 companies involved in asphalt pavement production and application (paving) across the nation. Our members produce over 400 million tons of asphalt pavement every year, supporting close to 300,000 employees nationwide. Asphalt comprises 94% of the highway- and 80% of the airfield-pavement market, being the most flexible and sustainable pavement material. NAPA's laydown contractor members are out working on public roadways every day, maintaining the country's critical infrastructure network. Their workplace is inherently dangerous because individuals work close to moving equipment and high-speed traffic.

Advocating for Enhanced WZS: Every year, almost 100,000 work zone crashes occur leading to over 35,000 injuries and almost 1,000 deaths – including almost 150 construction worker fatalities: Find other work zone statistics [here](#).

- Work zone crashes have a substantial economic cost, estimated at over \$35 billion dollars annually.
- There are numerous examples <https://workzonesafety.org/work-zone-data/> of the crashes leading to multiple fatalities over the last few years, including [incidents in Baltimore, Maryland](#), where six workers were killed by a single car, a [construction worker killed in Arkansas](#) by two teens drag racing, and in Washington, [4 different drivers crashed](#) into a work zone within 5 hours – and 9 people were hospitalized. Even though work zones may be set-up properly according to state requirements, such work zone crashes, and related fatalities continue to increase, year-over-year.
 - Earlier this year, Senator Braun (R-IN) Introduced a resolution recognizing [National Work Zone Awareness Week](#).
 - Read NAPA's latest op-ed in the Washington Times on the need to advance work zone safety [here](#).



A CRH paving crew, passed by a bus going 70mph (Photo courtesy of CRH America's)

Work Zone Safety Contingency Funds (WZSCFs): WZSCF were established under the [Infrastructure and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA, Pg. 31) to prioritize funding for WZS enhancements – both on projects that were currently under construction, where safety risks weren't properly identified during the time of bid, and for future road construction projects. Because State DOT projects are generally awarded based on 'low-bid', with minimal safety considerations specified by state or federal regulation, additional costs for enhancing WZS, outside of the original project scope, would be borne by the contractor.

- When needed, these federal funds can be accessed by the State DOT, usually through a simple change order, preventing a financial burden on the state or contractor. Find FHWA's WZSCF fact sheet [here](#).
- To ensure full and continued participation to enhance WZS, NAPA requested language in the latest [T-HUD appropriations](#) bill requiring FHWA to report on the use of these federal WZSCFs and effectiveness ahead of the next highway bill.

How Congress Can Lead on WZS: Although WZS policy is primarily handled by state and local governments, it is important that Congress and the Administration provide states with the funding, resources, and flexibility to ensure State DOTs and law enforcement have the tools necessary to further enhance WZS and improve outcomes.

- **Reporting** – Require FHWA to report on the use of WZSCF annually. This will bring more transparency to the program and highlight successes and challenges of implementation.
- **Education** – Require State DOTs to provide 'new driver education' on WZS as part of their driver's safety course.
- **Enforcement** – Provide additional resources and opportunities for law enforcement agencies to assist State DOTs in work zone operations and speed enforcement.
- **Industry Collaboration** – Create a federal Work Zone Safety Working Group including stakeholders from industry, labor, and state / federal transportation and occupational health agencies.

NAPA Contacts: For more information, please contact NAPA's Vice President of Government Affairs, [Nile Elam](#), or Director of Government Affairs, [Mitch Baldwin](#), regarding these critical issues and NAPA presence in your communities.