

# MAFES Dawg Tracks

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**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™**  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Work Zone Awareness*

This is National Work Zone Awareness week. The key message is for drivers to use extra caution in work zones.

Work zones are hazardous for the motorist who drive through and, even more so, for the workers. Please keep the following tips in mind when driving through work zones:

- Slow down and always follow posted work zone speed limits. Speeding is one of the major causes of work zone crashes. Remember, traffic fines double in work zones when workers are present; fines can cost up to \$2,000.
- Pay attention. Workers and heavy equipment may only be a few feet from passing vehicles.
- Don't tailgate.
- Stay alert and minimize distractions such as cell phones.
- Obey road crew flaggers.
- Expect the unexpected. Delays from highway construction can be frustrating, but it only takes a few extra minutes to slow down for a work zone.
- Plan ahead. Leave a few minutes early when traveling through a work zone in order to reach your destination on time.

What about if YOU are working on the side of the road. Here at MSU, we have some faculty & students that conduct grass research along the right-of-way and staff who maintain the grass and landscape along the road. The following tips can be helpful in those situations or even if you simply have vehicle trouble and have to pull over on the edge of the road.

## **Have a Plan:**

Set up an advanced warning area with warning signs alerting motorists of upcoming changes in driving conditions, a buffer area, the work area and a termination area to allow traffic to resume back to normal and a sign indicating that the work zone has ended. Crew leaders should start the job with a safety meeting each day to brief workers on the work activity scheduled and notified of all potential hazards.

## **Be visible:**

\*One of the most important pieces of personal safety equipment in a work zone is highly visible clothing. All highly visible clothing whether it's a vest, jacket or shirt should be bright fluorescent orange or lime/yellow and have visible reflective material especially if working at night and should meet ANSI Class 2 or 3 standards. Keep in mind that this clothing can fade over time from sun exposure and the washing machine; get new when this happens.

\*Ensure your vehicles, trailers, & larger equipment have flashing lights and/or strobe lights and that they work.

## **Be Aware of Your Surroundings:**

Always be mindful of what's going on around you. Whenever possible, face traffic while inside the work zone or have a spotter available when your back is turned.

*For more info contact – Leslie Woolington*

**MAFES /MSU-EXTENSION**

**Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control**

**(662) 325-3204**

Sources:

<http://www.txdot.gov/driver/share-road/work-zones.html>  
<https://www.constructconnect.com/blog/construction-safety/10-road-construction-work-zone-safety-tips/>