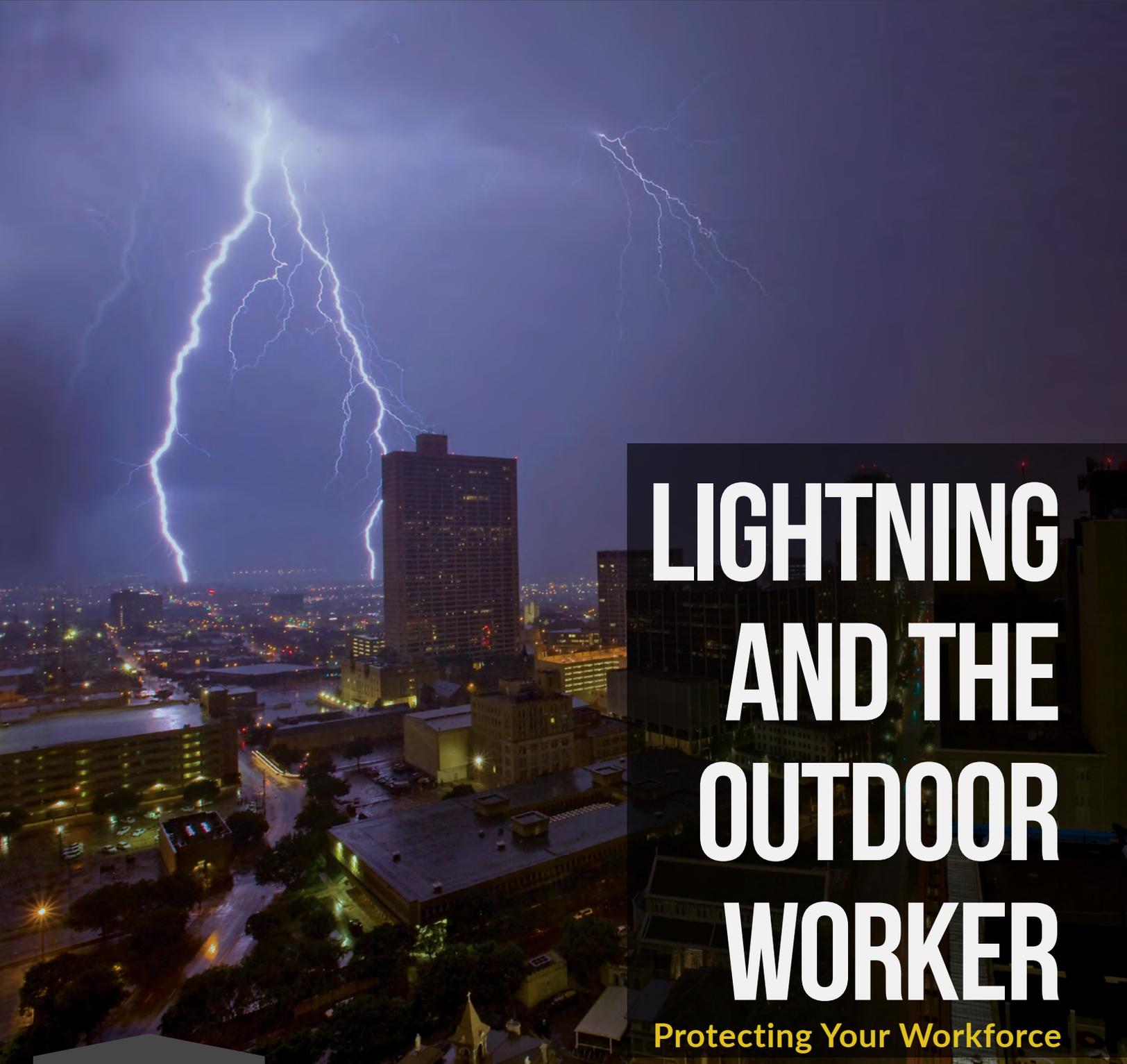


BETTER ROADS SAFER ROADS



LIGHTNING AND THE OUTDOOR WORKER

Protecting Your Workforce

BETTER ROADS SAFER ROADS

Winter 2019 | TxLTAP.org

- TxLTAP -

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The Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) is a nationwide effort financed by the Federal Highway Administration and individual state departments of transportation. Its purpose is to translate into understandable terms the best available technology for roadways, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and public transportation for city and county roadway and transportation personnel. The TxLTAP, operated by the University of Texas at Arlington, is sponsored by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration. This newsletter is designed to keep you informed about new publications, techniques, and training opportunities that may be helpful to you and your community.

NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL'S SAFE DRIVER OF YEAR AWARD NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

Show your organization's commitment to driver safety by submitting a nomination to the Joseph M. Kaplan Safe Driver of the Year Award. This non-competitive, member-exclusive program lets you recognize individuals that drive a specific period of time or miles without a preventable motor vehicle collision. Established in 2004, the Joseph M. Kaplan Safe Driver of the Year Award was created to recognize outstanding drivers throughout the country who have driven a significant number of miles/years behind the wheel without incurring a preventable crash. Due to an overwhelming number of submissions throughout the years, the Safe Driver of the Year Award has been expanded to recognize multiple safe drivers throughout the country by geographic region. Any member may submit drivers who they feel exemplify outstanding driving safety. The top drivers among all of the nominees will be recognized with the highest honor as the **Joseph M. Kaplan Safe Driver of the Year**. In addition, each Joseph M. Kaplan Award Region winner will be honored at the **National Awards Celebration**. All Award of Honor winners will receive a free personalized certificate from the National Safety Council recognizing their accomplishment.

Award Criteria

- This contest is only open to active members of the National Safety Council.
- All data is self-reported and is subject to verification.
- Nominees must be full-time drivers whose primary responsibility is to operate buses, trucks, passenger cars, or other motor vehicles on a regular basis in the performance of their normal duties.
- Drivers who have been involved in a collision during the award period will be disqualified, unless it is ruled as a non-preventable incident.
- Nominees must meet the minimum requirement of **15 years or 250,000** miles driven without a preventable incident to be considered.
- Nominees must have been employed by the nominating member company for at least one year (12 consecutive months).
- Nominations must be made by someone familiar with the nominee's work history, such as a supervisor, coworker or professional peer.
- Nominees cannot nominate themselves.
- Candidates for the Joseph M. Kaplan Safe Driver of the Year Award are judged based upon their total driving record throughout their career including the following criteria: total number of year's driven, total number of miles driven, total number of collisions, type(s) of vehicle authorized to operate, and the nominator's statement.
- Previous winners of the Joseph M. Kaplan Safe Driver of the Year will not be considered for the award.
- Nomination submittal deadline is the close of business, March 31 each year.

Award Recognition

- Nominees who meet the minimum requirement will receive the Award of Honor and automatically be considered for the Joseph M. Kaplan Safe Driver of the Year Award.
- All qualifying Award of Honor nominees will receive a congratulatory letter and personalized certificate from the National Safety Council.
- All drivers who qualify will be categorized by 10 geographic regions.
- The top driver from each Region will be designated as one of the Joseph M. Kaplan Safe Driver of the Year Award winners. Award winners will be notified by e-mail (via the nominator) and honored at the annual National Awards Celebration held during the National Safety Council Congress & Expo.

Nominate Your Driver by visiting <http://safety.nsc.org/safe-driver-award>.

THE BASICS OF HIGH VISIBILITY SAFETY APPAREL

Reprinted with permission from the National Safety Council.

Workers in a wide variety of jobs and industries wear high-visibility safety apparel to alert others of their presence, particularly in dark or dim places. Users include utility linemen, construction workers, police officers and school bus drivers, to name a few.

DIFFERENT TYPES

The materials in high-visibility garments, including vests, bibs, coveralls and gloves, may look alike, but they have key differences. For example, “fluorescent material takes a portion of invisible ultraviolet light from sunlight and, through special pigments, sends it back to the viewer as more visible light,” the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) explains. This type of material only functions in natural sunlight.

“The parts of the apparel that come into direct contact with the worker should not be rough, have sharp edges, or projections that could cause excessive irritation or injuries.”

Another type of high-visibility safety apparel is retroreflective material, which returns light in the direction of its source. “This property will let a driver see the light being reflected from the retroreflective material on a person’s garment (as long as the person is standing in the light’s beam),” CCOHS notes. Although this type of material can be used in daylight, it’s most effective in low-light conditions.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

In addition to complying with relevant OSHA standards for high-visibility apparel, employers should keep in mind certain factors when determining which apparel to supply to their workers.

According to CCOHS:

- Stripes of color that contrast with the background material provide good visibility, and stripes on the arms and legs can

help provide cues as to how the worker is moving.

- All high-visibility garments should be fitted to individual workers. However, don’t forget to take into account the bulk of clothing that needs to be worn under the apparel.
- Keep worker comfort in mind. “The parts of the apparel that come into direct contact with the worker should not be rough, have sharp edges, or projections that could cause excessive irritation or injuries,” CCOHS states, adding that the apparel also should be lightweight.
- No clothing or equipment should cover the high-visibility materials.
- Ensure workers keep their high-visibility apparel clean and in good condition.
- Replace any garment that is worn, torn or excessively soiled, as it won’t provide acceptable levels of visibility.

For more information on the different types of high-visibility apparel, visit ccohs.ca/oshanswers/prevention/ppe/high_visibility.html.



SLOWER DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN SAFER: NCHRP GUIDE HELPS PLANNERS MITIGATE WORK ZONE CRASHES

Roadways don't build themselves. They require careful planning, construction and regular maintenance, all of which require work zones designed to keep both workers and travelers safe.

Sometimes those measures fail. According to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in 2017, there were 27,148 work zone crashes in Texas. Of those, 199 were fatalities, and 813 resulted in serious injuries. TxDOT and other state and national agencies responsible for building and maintaining our transportation system are consistently looking for ways to decrease those numbers.

Rear-end collisions can occur more frequently due to slow-downs and traffic congestion during roadway construction.

Consider the concept of accelerated construction — building the system faster, smarter and with a goal to make it last longer — in the context of safety. One might think that doing things faster inherently means doing them less safely, but Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) Senior Research Engineer Jerry Ullman looks at it a different way.

“Reducing the duration of the project is a big safety win, actually,” says Ullman, manager of TTI’s Work Zone and Dynamic Signs Program. “Each additional day a work zone exists increases the chance of a crash occurring in it.”

Ullman and his team recently completed National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Project 17-61, Analysis of Work Zone Crash Characteristics and Countermeasures. TTI performed an in-depth analysis of crash narratives to better understand why crashes occur in work zones.

“It was no surprise to anyone that rear-end collisions and sideswipes with another vehicle or barrier are the most common types of crashes due to slow-downs and the congestion that naturally occurs during construction,” Ullman says. “Driver confusion upon approaching a work zone,

as well as work vehicles entering and exiting the area are also significant factors.”

The advent of intelligent transportation systems offers solutions to some of the issues uncovered by analyzing the crash narratives. For example, TTI led the deployment of an end-of-queue warning system as part of its support for TxDOT during the I-35 Reconstruction Project. Since 2011, the 96-mile widening and safety improvement effort between

“Each additional day a work zone exists increases the chance of a crash occurring in it.”

Hillsboro and Salado, Texas, has spanned a multitude of work zones that, literally, see hundreds of thousands of cars a day pass through them. Deploying the end-of-queue warning system upstream of a work zone — and warning travelers of slow-downs before they happen — has helped reduce crashes by up to 55 percent. Other options, like rumble strips, can also alert drivers to upcoming safety hazards.

“Mitigating the interactions between the traveling public and work vehicles entering and exiting the work space is also important,” Ullman explains. “Designing access points to allow work vehicle/equipment deceleration and acceleration out of the main travel lanes before entering or exiting a work area can reduce

conflicts and crashes, as can the use of technology to warn approaching motorists of slower moving construction vehicles and equipment when they are actually present.”

As part of the NCHRP project, researchers developed Estimating the Safety Effects of Work Zone Characteristics and Countermeasures: A Guidebook. The guidebook assists traffic planners developing phasing and staging plans for temporary traffic control through work zones to better evaluate the expected safety impacts of their plans. Those stages are crucial to successful accelerated-construction efforts, and maximizing safety when planning them is just as vital.

“NCHRP’s guidebook helps planners understand the safety implications of alternative work zone designs under consideration,” Ullman says. “It also provides information on how effective the various crash mitigation strategies are at saving lives.”

As we look for ways to improve our transportation system — to make it faster, less expensive to build and longer lasting — improving safety is always of paramount importance. That emphasis has to start with the work zones themselves, before a single square foot of asphalt is ever laid down.

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LIGHTNING AND THE OUTDOOR WORKER: PROTECTING YOUR WORKFORCE

Texas ranks among the top states for lightning fatalities each year. According to the [2018 Annual Lightning Report](#) published by Vaisala - a world leader in comprehensive lightning data - Texas had the highest overall lightning strike count in the US, with 2,483,805 cloud-to-ground lightning strikes. According to the National Weather Service, about 300 people are struck by lightning each year in the United States, resulting in approximately 30 deaths and numerous other serious injuries.

2018 Top 10 States with the Most Cloud-to-Ground Flashes

Top Ten 2018 Cloud-to-Ground Flashes by State		
1	Texas	2,483,805
2	Florida	1,385,710
3	Oklahoma	958,925
4	Kansas	928,760
5	Nebraska	889,019
6	Louisiana	854,871
7	Arkansas	768,168
8	Missouri	711,222
9	New Mexico	699,719
10	Georgia	693,776



- Seek shelter in an enclosed building or hard-topped vehicle when they hear thunder. Remain in the shelter until 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.
- Avoid objects that conduct electricity, including metal objects such as scaffolds, heavy equipment or light poles; plug-in power tools or telephones; puddles or bodies of water; pipes; and trees.
- Follow your employer's written emergency action plan outlining lightning safety procedures.

[The CPWR Toolbox Talk - Lightning](#) provides tips on what workers should do when shelter options are not available. Among them:

- Make sure you are not the highest object in the area.
- Refrain from standing in the open, on a roof, under a tree or in an open shelter.
- Reduce your risk of being struck by squatting down with your feet together, allowing only your feet to touch the ground.
- Cover your ears with your hands to protect against noise.
- If a co-worker is struck by lightning, he or she will not carry an electrical charge. Call 911 and then move the victim to shelter until help arrives. Perform CPR if the victim does not have a pulse. Use an automated external defibrillator, if available.

For additional employer and worker recommendation related to lightning safety, refer to the [Lightning Safety When Working Outdoors Fact Sheet](#) developed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Excerpts reprinted with permission from the National Safety Council.

VAISALA / 2018 ANNUAL LIGHTNING REPORT

Workers whose jobs involve working outdoors in open spaces, on or near tall objects, or near explosives or conductive materials (e.g., metal) have significant exposure to lightning risks. The Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) advises workers to:

HAZARD ALERT



Lightning



Am I in danger?

If you hear thunder and are not in an enclosed building, then the answer is **YES**.

- ▶ Lightning injures or kills hundreds of people in the U.S. each year. Construction workers who work in open spaces, on roofs, or other high places are at risk of being struck by lightning.
- ▶ Lightning can stop your heart and kill you. It can also cause burns, nervous system damage, and other health problems you may not notice until months after a lightning strike.

Source: OSHA 29 CFR 1926.35
Source: <http://elcosh.org/document/4154/d001459/osha-noaa-fact-sheet%3A-lightning-safety-when-working-outdoors.html>

If you are out in the open and have nowhere to go...

- 1. Squat down** with your feet together. Only let your feet touch the ground. Do not sit or lie flat on the ground. Since lightning travels through the ground, the more contact you have with the ground, the greater your risk for injury or death.
- 2.** Put your hands over your ears to protect against noise.

Use this position to reduce your risk of being struck by lightning.



Source: <http://elcosh.org/document/4154/d001459/osha-noaa-fact-sheet%3A-lightning-safety-when-working-outdoors.html>

If someone is injured by lightning...

- ▶ **Call 911.**
- ▶ A victim does not stay electrified. You can touch him/her right away.
- ▶ If the victim has no pulse, perform CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation).
- ▶ If there is a portable defibrillator, follow the instructions.
- ▶ Avoid staying in the open during a storm to take care of the victim. Move the victim to a sheltered area.



Source: <http://elcosh.org/document/4154/d001459/osha-noaa-fact-sheet%3A-lightning-safety-when-working-outdoors.html>

If you hear thunder...

1 Get into an enclosed building



- ▶ If you hear even a distant rumble of thunder, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) says you “should get to a safe place immediately” and “remain in the shelter for at least 30 minutes after hearing the last sound of thunder.”
- ▶ If you can’t find a building, get into a hard-topped car or truck with the windows closed. Do not touch the doors or other metal inside.
- ▶ **Do NOT** stand out in the open, on a roof, covered porch or open shelter, like a baseball dugout or bus shelter.

2 Avoid objects that conduct electricity



- ▶ Metal objects—scaffolds, heavy equipment, or light poles.
- ▶ Plug-in power tools or telephones, even if indoors.
- ▶ Water—puddles or pipes.
- ▶ Trees (if the tree is hit, you can be too.)

3 Follow the Emergency Action Plan



Photo Courtesy of Earl Dotter/SNC-LAVALIN/CPWR

Your employer should have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP)* that includes written lightning safety procedures. The EAP should identify locations and requirements for safe shelters, describe when to stop outdoor work, and when it is safe to resume work.

Source: OSHA 29 CFR 1926.35

To learn more:

- ▶ Regulations: OSHA 29 CFR 1926.35 <https://tinyurl.com/OSHA-Lightning>
- ▶ CPWR Toolbox Talk: Lightning Protection <http://www.cpw.com/publications/toolbox-talks>
- ▶ CPWR Construction Solutions: <http://www.cpw.com/constructionsolutions.org/search.php?q=lightning>

To receive copies of this Hazard Alert and cards on other topics: call **301-578-8500** or visit **www.cpw.com**

If you think you are in danger:

Contact your supervisor.
Contact your union.

Call OSHA
1-800-321-OSHA

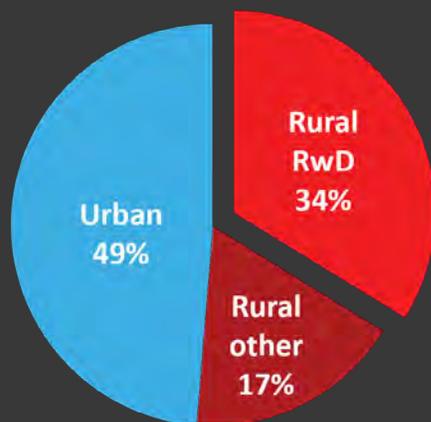


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STAYING IN THE LANE: RURAL ROADWAY DEPARTURES

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ROADWAY DEPARTURE SAFETY

Rural road safety is often highlighted as a major safety issue since nearly 50% of traffic fatalities occur on rural road networks, even though only 19% of the US population lives in rural areas. A lesser known statistic is that fully two-thirds of these rural fatalities is a roadway departure, where a vehicle veers outside of its travel lane. It's clear that when attempting to address the overall issue of rural road safety, special attention must be paid to roadway departures.



Rural roadway departures (RwD) account for approximately one-third of all traffic fatalities.

The rural road network is challenging in both size and environment; it accounts for over 70% of public roadway mileage, traverses every imaginable climate and environmental hazard, and is under the jurisdiction of thousands of separate entities. With so many differing challenges and so many different people responsible for its maintenance, it can sometimes be difficult to identify the right course of action. This time of year, as we enter the long winter season, run-off-the-road crashes are likely to increase due to compromised visibility related to weather, deteriorated roadway conditions, wildlife collisions, and shortened daylight hours. With this in mind, it is particularly important to spread the word about available countermeasures that have been tried and tested around the country.

Thankfully, the Federal Highway Administration has included Reducing Rural Roadway Departures as one of the Every Day

This time of year, as we enter the long winter season, run-off-the-road crashes are likely to increase due to compromised visibility related to weather, deteriorated roadway conditions, wildlife collisions, and shortened daylight hours.

Counts Round 5 initiatives to bring more attention to the available safety countermeasures that can improve safety of the rural roadway system. While the size of the rural system and limited resources make it unrealistic to apply countermeasures everywhere, there are ways to determine where the best locations are to install such things as high friction surface treatments, widened shoulders and clear zones, additional signage and pavement markings, rumble strips and guardrail.

Data-driven systemic analysis is the best support tool to help local agencies prioritize locations and select appropriate countermeasures.

For more information on Rural Roadway Departures, there are several convenient to listen to webinars:

FHWA Rural Roadway Departures Webinar Recording:

<https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/p1982115wf44/>

And, two webinars from the National Center for Rural Road Safety: <https://ruralsafetycenter.org/resources/list/rural-roadway-departure-countermeasures-part-1/>

<https://ruralsafetycenter.org/resources/list/rural-roadway-departure-countermeasures-part-2/>

There is a webinar recording from FHWA on Data-Driven Safety Analysis (DDSA) for Local Roads: <https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/ddsalocal/>

And, a webinar from the National Center for Rural Road Safety on safety data analysis: <https://ruralsafetycenter.org/resources/list/fhwa-safety-data-analysis-toolbox/>

TRANSPORTATION LEADERS MEET BOOMING GROWTH WITH FUNDING, CONSTRUCTION

A \$75 Billion 10-Year “Construction Budget”; Our Commitment to You for Statewide Congestion Relief, Connectivity & Safety

As the population and economy of Texas continue to boom, state transportation leaders have taken unprecedented steps to promote the great opportunities in Texas’ future while meeting and addressing the challenges of congestion, roadway safety, connectivity and the preservation of existing roads. Since 2015, the Texas Transportation Commission and Texas Department of Transportation established the Texas Clear Lanes initiative, which has led to significant strides toward improving the quality of life for millions of Texas drivers.

“Governor Greg Abbott and Texas voters made it very clear that congestion relief around the state is a key priority to meeting the demands of our rapidly growing population and booming economy,” said Texas Transportation Commission Chairman, J. Bruce Bugg, Jr. “In our efforts to execute on that Texas voter mandate, we directed more than \$24 billion toward congestion in our major

metropolitan areas as part of the approved \$75.4 billion Unified Transportation Program over the next 10 years; our ‘Construction Budget’ is the largest funding package in Texas history. Explosive growth presents opportunities the size of Texas but requires unprecedented action, and we look forward to meeting the needs and demands of our growing state.”

Additionally, since 2015, more than 1,300 lane miles have been added to state roads and more than 2,600 non-tolled road projects worth \$11 billion have been completed. Other highlights include:

- A historic \$3 billion worth of road project contracts approved during June, July and August of 2018.
- Nearly \$8 billion in approved road contracts for fiscal year 2018.

On average, Texas is growing by about 1,100 people each day. To meet this growth, Texas Clear Lanes addresses congestion in the Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio and Austin areas, which are home to 65 percent of the state’s population and 92 of Texas’ Top 100 congested roads. Of the approximately 30 identified Texas Clear Lanes projects, two have been completed and 16 are under construction. Some of those address traffic in the top 20 chokepoints around the state. Others are included in the 10-year plan.

Also a key priority for the Commission and department is addressing safety and roadway improvements in the

energy sector. Over the next decade, the Transportation Commission has directed \$3.4 billion to make repairs and improve roads in the energy-rich Permian Basin. Since 2016, nearly \$1.8 billion has been invested in safety and infrastructure improvements in the Permian Basin.

On the topic of safety, there is much improvement ahead of us around the state, though recent statistics are noteworthy. Safety education and awareness are vital aspects in affecting driver behavior. And that commitment is starting to show. From 2016-2017, we saw 70 fewer fatalities on Texas roads. Bicycle and pedestrian fatalities decreased by 10 percent. The Commission continues to make substantial investment in education, training and awareness as we try to make Texas a safer place to work and live. In addition, safety is a key factor in scoring and ranking projects for inclusion in TxDOT’s 10-year plan.

“While there is much work to do ahead of us, I am proud of, and always want to thank, the hardworking men and women of TxDOT for the momentum we have established and plan to execute on,” Bugg said. “Transportation touches the lives of every Texan, every day, and there’s no time to wait as we deliver on our commitment to keep Texas moving forward.”

For media inquiries, contact TxDOT Media Relations at MediaRelations@txdot.gov or (512) 463-8700.

SLOPE IT

800-321-OSHA (6742)

SHORE IT

SHIELD IT



OSHA UPDATES NATIONAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM ON TRENCHING AND EXCAVATION SAFETY

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has updated the National Emphasis Program (NEP) on preventing trenching and excavation collapses in response to a recent spike in trenching fatalities.

OSHA's [NEP](#) will increase education and enforcement efforts while its inspectors will record trenching and excavation inspections in a national reporting system, and each area OSHA office will develop outreach programs.

"Removing workers from and helping workers identify trenching hazards is critical," said Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Loren Sweatt. "OSHA will concentrate the full force of enforcement and compliance assistance resources to help ensure that employers are addressing these serious hazards."

The emphasis program began October 1, 2018, with a three-month period of education and prevention outreach. During this period, OSHA will continue to respond to complaints, referrals, hospitalizations, and fatalities. Enforcement activities will begin after the outreach period and remain in effect until canceled. OSHA-approved State Plans are expected to have enforcement procedures that are at least as effective as those in this instruction.

OSHA has developed a series of [compliance assistance resources](#) to help keep workers safe from trenching and excavation hazards. OSHA's goal is to increase awareness of trenching hazards in construction, educate job creators and workers on safe cave-in prevention solutions, and decrease the number of trench collapses. These resources, which continue the goals of the Department's recently announced Office of Compliance Initiatives (OCI), encourage and facilitate compliance evaluations.

Trench-related injuries are preventable when workers are properly trained and the required protections are in place. OSHA is working with industry stakeholders and providing new compliance assistance resources.

- U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta recorded audio public service announcements in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) that highlight effective ways to stay safe when working around trenches and excavations. A 45-second video, "[5 Things You Should Know to Stay Safe](#)," also highlights well-known and proven safety measures that can eliminate hazards and prevent worker injuries.
- An updated [trenching operations QuickCard](#) provides information on protecting workers around trenches, including daily inspections, and trench wall safety.
- OSHA's revised "[Protect Workers in Trenches](#)" poster provides a quick reminder of the three ways to prevent dangerous trench collapses: SLOPE or bench trench walls, SHORE trench walls with supports, or SHIELD trench walls with trench boxes. The poster is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- An updated [trenching and excavation webpage](#) provides additional information on trenching hazards and solutions.

OSHA's [On-Site Consultation Program](#) provides valuable services for job creators that are separate from enforcement. OSHA recently

published an [analysis](#) demonstrating how the agency's On-Site Consultation Program contributes \$1.3 billion to the national economy each year. Job creators who implement workplace improvements can reduce lost time due to injuries and illnesses, improve employee morale, increase productivity, and lower workers' compensation insurance premiums.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to help ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit www.osha.gov.



Working Safely in Trenches

When done safely, trenching operations can reduce worker exposure to cave-ins, falling loads, hazardous atmospheres, and hazards from mobile equipment.



OSHA standards require that trenches and protective systems be inspected daily and as conditions change by a competent person before work begins.

Never enter a trench unless:

- It has been properly inspected by a competent person.
- Cave-in protection measures are in place.
- There is a safe way to enter and exit.
- Equipment and materials are away from the edge.
- It is free of standing water and atmospheric hazards.

Prevent trench collapses:

- Trenches 5 feet deep or greater require a protective system.
- Trenches 20 feet deep or greater require a protective system designed by a registered professional engineer.

Protective systems for trenches:

- SLOPE or bench trench walls by cutting back the trench wall at an angle inclined away from the excavation.
- SHORE trench walls by installing aluminum hydraulic or other types of supports to prevent soil movement.
- SHIELD trench walls by using trench boxes or other types of supports to prevent soil cave-ins.

For more information:



OSHA Occupational Safety and Health Administration
www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA (6742)

OSHA 3243-09R 2018

TEXAS TO FORM CONNECTED AND AUTOMATED VEHICLE TASK FORCE

State to build momentum as key area for innovation and investment around CAV projects

Texas Department of Transportation announced today it is going to create a Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) Task Force to become a central point for CAV advancement in Texas. The task force is designed to be a one-stop resource for information and coordination on all ongoing CAV projects, investments and initiatives in Texas. In addition to documenting public and private entity efforts and facilitating partnerships, the CAV Task Force will host industry forums and report lessons learned to facilitate progress and encourage greater collaboration.

"With our world-class universities, top-notch workforce and startup culture, Texas is a national leader in the development of new technologies," said Gov. Greg Abbott. "As transportation technology advances, the CAV Task Force will ensure that the Lone Star State remains at the forefront of innovation."

"Our goal is to further build on the momentum already established with the Texas Technology Task Force and the Texas Innovation Alliance, and work with interested parties on the latest and greatest in CAV projects and enhancements," said TxDOT Executive Director James Bass. "We look forward to furthering these important efforts as connected and autonomous vehicles become reality."

TxDOT has had a keen interest in the progress of autonomous vehicles as they have the potential to greatly reduce crashes and improve roadway safety over time. They also provide

opportunities to reimagine personal and commercial mobility with quality of life and economic benefits. For example, CAV technology could enable greater mobility for those who rely on transportation from others to access health care and routine appointments, such as the elderly and people with disabilities.

*"With our world-class universities,
top-notch workforce and startup
culture, Texas is a national leader
in the development of new
technologies."*

The task force will continue to enable companies to pursue innovative ideas around CAV technology in a business-friendly way that has been the calling card for Texas in this space and others over time. It will also build on legislation passed by the 85th Legislature related to how connected and autonomous vehicles can operate in the Lone Star State.

For media inquiries, contact TxDOT Media Relations at MediaRelations@txdot.gov or (512) 463-8700.



The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), a nonprofit association representing the highway safety offices of states, territories, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, recently issued a press release to thank the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) for conducting ongoing research to better understand the prevalence of distracted driving and its role in traffic crashes. [IIHS' study](#) validates what all drivers see every day: the pervasive use of wireless devices behind the wheel. Further, additional national data supports the finding that rather than making voice calls, more drivers are now manipulating smartphones to text, use apps or access the Internet.

In 2017, there were 449 people killed in crashes involving distracted driving, a 2% reduction from the 260 killed in 2016.

IIHS found that though the nature of distracted driving has changed between 2014 and 2018, the overall incidence has remained the same, suggesting that the traffic safety community needs to do more to address this issue, including changing social norms, strengthening and enforcing [distracted driving laws](#) and improving data collection. We should also harness technology as part of the solution to the problem it has provoked by promoting tools like smartphone apps and settings that block incoming wireless communications while driving.

GHSA is proud to partner with AT&T on the “It Can Wait” campaign, which, in addition to having amassed pledges from more than 35 million people committing to drive without distraction, is joining forces with state highway safety offices and hosting educational events nationwide to change the culture surrounding distracted driving. To learn more, visit ghsa.org/resources/partner-initiatives/ICW.

DISTRACTED DRIVING LAWS IN TEXAS:

- **Hand-held Cell Phone Use Ban:**
Yes, in active school zones
- **All Cell Phone Use Ban:**
Yes, for School Bus Drivers when passengers are 17 and under. Primary enforcement law.
Yes, for Novice Drivers under 18. Primary enforcement law.
- **Text Messaging Ban:**
Yes, for all drivers. Primary enforcement law.

STUDY SHOWS DISTRACTED DRIVING IS CHANGING BUT RISKS REMAIN



ROAD CONSTRUCTION WORKER FATALITIES ON THE RISE

According to a recent report issued by the Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR), working at road construction sites can be dangerous. Between 2011 and 2016, 532 construction workers lost their lives at road construction sites, an average of 89 workers each year. CPWR's Data Center recently explored road construction fatality trends and causes using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among the key findings:

- **About half** of these deaths happened when a worker on foot was struck by a vehicle or mobile heavy equipment (such as a dump truck on the worksite, or a passing car intruding on the worksite).
- **Construction laborers** suffered the greatest number of construction fatalities, and both the number and rate of laborers' fatalities increased substantially during the economic recovery.
- **"Crossing Guards" (i.e., flaggers)** had the highest risk, with 41 out of every 100,000 workers killed on the job each year.

These deaths can be prevented with proper deployment of barriers and intrusion alarms to protect workers from passing vehicles, improved traffic enforcement in work zones, and other interventions. To learn more, visit CPWR's [Construction Solutions](#) database.

The complete Quarterly Data Report, Fatal Injuries at Road Construction Sites among Construction Workers, is available on the [CPWR website](#).

For more information on upcoming events and workshops, visit txltap.org

Call the TxLTAP office at 817-272-9678 or email us at txltap@uta.edu to schedule an event or workshop near you.

GRAVEL ROADS ACADEMY

Improve upon current knowledge related to gravel road maintenance best practices. Learn how to get more mileage out of your gravel roads budget with the latest tools, techniques, and know-how from road maintenance experts.

HEAVY EQUIPMENT RODEO

Heavy equipment operators will be given a chance to learn and practice new skills while stressing safety and excellence. Operators will use maintainers, backhoes, dump trucks, loaders, and more to steer through a series of exercises designed to test their abilities.

HEAVY EQUIPMENT FOR WILDFIRES

Heavy Equipment Operators are sometimes called out to assist fire fighters in wildland fire situations. Learn methods of attacking a fire, techniques of diminishing a fire with a dozer and grader, and dangerous situations to avoid.

SNOW AND ICE TECHNIQUES

Snow and ice control is a complex process. This workshop will cover personal and operational safety, plowing techniques, salt and abrasive application, and decision making based on the forecast and actual in storm conditions.



TXLTAP EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

TXLTAP IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE SOME OF THE MOST EXPERIENCED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONALS ON STAFF.

This staff includes former maintenance managers, heavy equipment operators, road crew chiefs, civil and transportation engineers, inspectors, and the public works directors who all worked on the state's road system and in a nutshell "have been there, done that." Now Texas' local roadway agencies can directly benefit from their street smarts.

While training and information sharing at conferences or through a newsletter can do a lot of good, TxLTAP recognizes sometimes there is just nothing like rolling up your sleeves, experiencing the problem first hand and then offering a meaningful solution. That's why in addition to hosting classes and publishing Better Roads, Safer Roads, our program offers local roadway agencies an opportunity to consult directly with a TxLTAP subject matter expert to specifically address your organization's unique issue. And like all resources TxLTAP offers, there is no charge to receive our help or expertise.

Do you need information on proper methods for repairing your lingering road problem? Would it help if someone came out to watch your road crew perform a repair and offer suggestions on how to save time and money in the future? Could you use the help of a traffic engineer who could assess a problematic intersection? Would it be a benefit to you if a subject matter expert came to ride the roads and developed a training presentation specific to your needs?

Take advantage of our technical assistance service!

Call 817-272-9678 or email us at txltap@uta.edu. We're ready to help!



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TxLTAP serves all local government roadway agencies by providing no charge training, technical assistance and resource access.

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