

# National Work Zone Awareness Week – By the Numbers

April’s National Work Zone Awareness Week highlights the importance of road safety for roadworkers and drivers as construction season kicks off. The Michigan-hosted 2021 program is titled: *Drive Safe. Work Safe. Save Lives.*

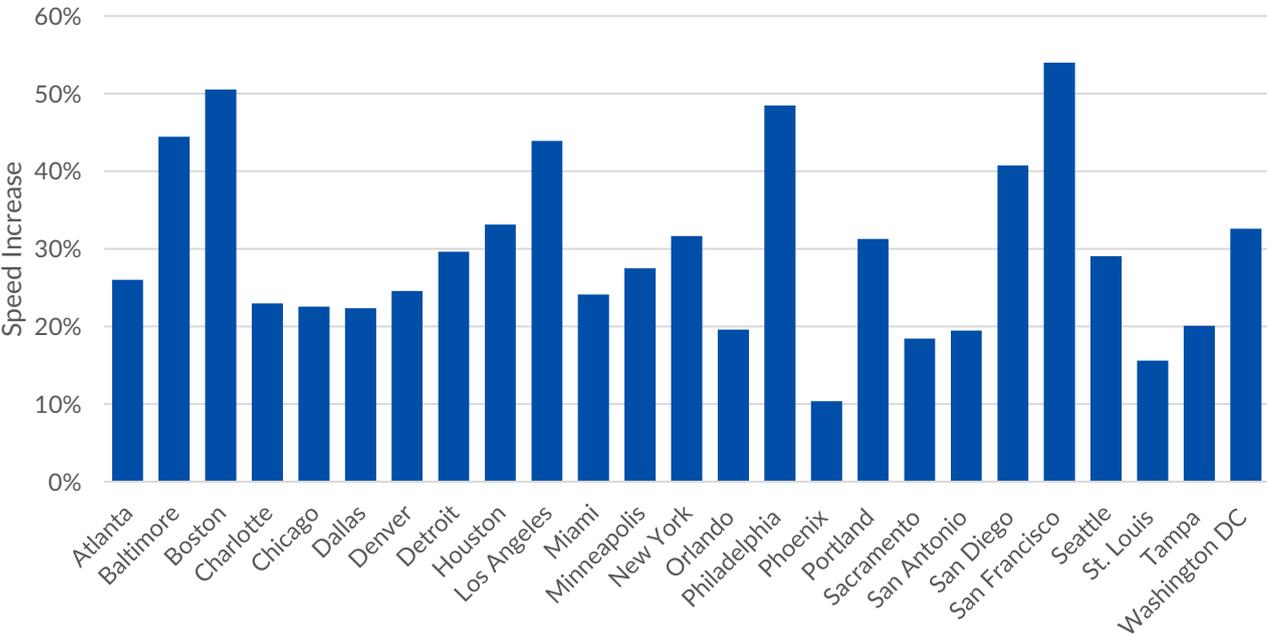
Work zone fatality and injury rates increased 46% over the last decade, from 521 fatal work zone crashes in 2010, to 762 in 2019. Roadwork fatalities comprised an increase in share of roadway deaths, rising from 1.7% to 2.3%. It is estimated that 39,000 injuries occurred in work zones due to collisions in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

33% of work zone fatalities involve a commercial motor vehicle, and speeding was a factor in 31%. The vast majority occur on arterial streets (51%) and Interstates (38%). And in the United States, 74% of collisions occur on just 5% of roads.<sup>2</sup> Drivers and passengers make up 82% of deadly crashes in work zones, while pedestrians, bicyclists and other conveyances comprise the remaining 18%.

Work Zone Awareness Week comes at a troubling time in transportation safety. The estimated fatality rate in 2020 (fatalities per 100M VMT) jumped 24%, the highest annual increase since data has been collected. In the INRIX Riskiest Roads report, VMT plummeted, causing travel speeds across major metropolitan areas to soar. As traffic congestion decreases, collisions also drop; though the *severity* of incidents increase.

Speed is a major contributing factor in serious injuries or fatalities in work zones. During the Spring and Summer of 2020, speeds increased more than 50% on Interstates and highways in Boston and San Francisco – and more than 40% in Baltimore, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and San Diego.

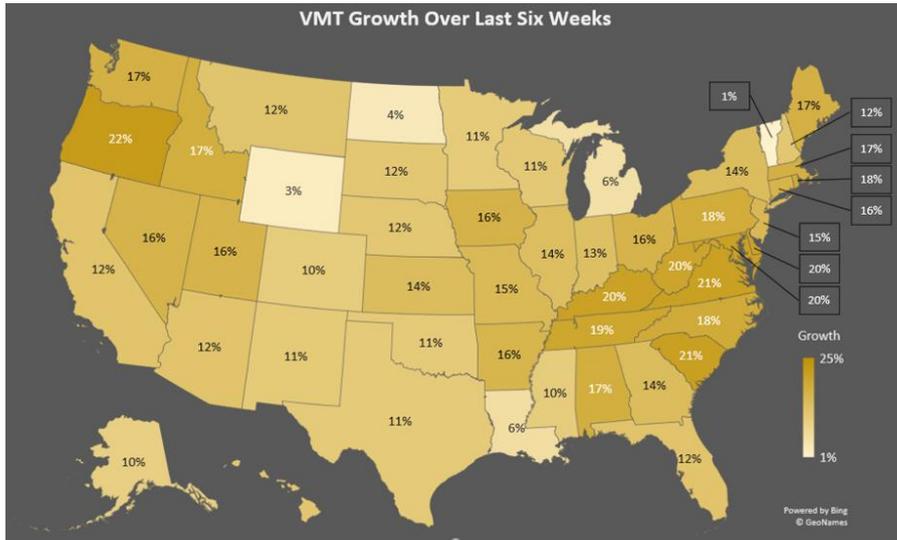
YoY Average Speed Change, by Metro (Apr-Oct)



1. Federal Highway Administration, “National Work Zone Awareness Week,” at [https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/outreach/nwzaw\\_factsheet\\_2021/nwzaw\\_factsheet\\_2021.pdf](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/outreach/nwzaw_factsheet_2021/nwzaw_factsheet_2021.pdf)  
 2. INRIX Riskiest Roads Report, <https://inrix.com/campaigns/the-riskiest-roads-in-the-usa-report/>

# Rise in 2021 Travel Should Urge Caution

Since March 2021, vehicle-miles traveled has increased 14% nationwide, and in some states, coincides with an increase in construction activity.



As the country re-emerges from the pandemic, VMT has grown. Yet recent increase in miles-traveled is due to the rise in total trips taken, rather than trip length. This translates to more people leaving the house and hitting the road.

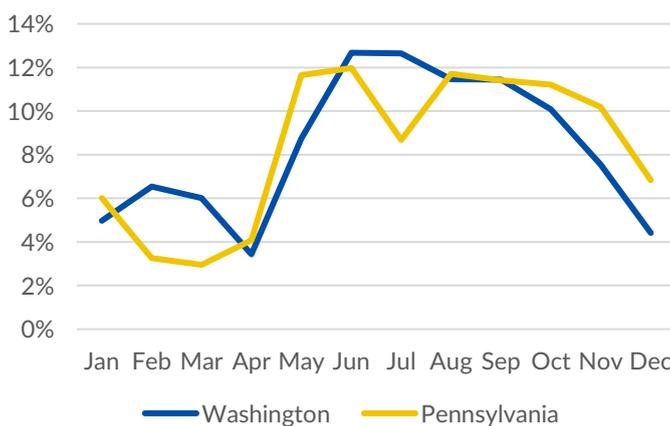
A reason for caution, the construction season in many states coincide with the driving season.

Using INRIX Incidents, the timing of road construction (widely defined as road closures, snow plowing, tree-trimming, or new construction) varies depending on climate and geography. This means that some states will experience a vast increase in work zone deployment during the warmer months, requiring more attentive driving, biking and walking.

For example, Washington and Pennsylvania show large increases in construction events starting in May, and taking a large downturn by October/November, while sunnier states like California and Florida experience similar levels of construction throughout the year.

As motorists hit the road, its vital to plan trips to avoid construction zones, obey traffic signage, and adhere to speed limits. In addition, employing the latest safety technologies, like road condition and safety alerts, can keep drivers up-to-date and increase awareness for those who work on our nation’s critical infrastructure.

Construction Incidents - Washington & Pennsylvania



Construction Incidents - California and Florida

