



## Get the Facts: Spring Safety on the Road

### In a Nutshell

Spring is here at last, and the driving may be easier but getting behind the wheel in warming weather comes with specific challenges.

### What should I know about Spring driving hazards?

After a long Minnesota winter and too much white-knuckle driving, spring roads beckon. However, nicer weather means driving safety challenges around work zones and can bring dangers from melting snow and icy roads in addition to heavy rains, flooding, mists and fog.

### Staying safe on springtime roads

- Slow down and increase your following distance when rain or mist begin to fall. Even a little moisture can mix with oil and grease on the road to create slippery conditions.
- Use your low-beam headlights. High beams reflect water fog and make it harder to see.
- To keep your windshield clear of moisture inside, turn on your fan and defroster. The air conditioner may also help.
- Avoid driving through large puddles; splashing water may affect your brakes, cause your car to swerve and impair other motorists' vision.
- Watch the road to see if the vehicle ahead is leaving tire tracks. If it is, follow in those tracks, if possible, for better traction. If not, reduce speed slowly to prevent hydroplaning.
- Watch for icy conditions due to thawing snow, spring rains or mist, especially in shaded areas, on bridges and on overpasses. Remember that these areas freeze first.
- Keep an eye out for pedestrians who may be less alert to traffic in rain and fog and more difficult for you to see.

*Spring typically marks the beginning of road repair season and other projects with roadside work zones.*

*It's also the start of risky days for roadside workers. Between 2017-2021 preliminary Minnesota data shows 40 people died and more than 3,100 were injured in work zone traffic crashes. Nationally, 117 workers died in highway work zones in 2020.*

### Keeping roadside workers safe





- *Plan Ahead.* Check for traffic conditions on your intended route. Information on active work zones is available online from many agencies and the private sector to help you plan your trip and potentially avoid work zones altogether.
- *Minimize Distractions.* Be aware of your surroundings, avoid changing radio stations and put your phone away in work zones. Work zones can change daily, so anticipate new traffic patterns.
- *Check Your Speed.* Obey posted work zone speed limits, look out for stopped or slow traffic and maintain a safe following distance to reduce the risk of crashes with other vehicles and with highway workers. Speed was a contributing factor in over 37% of 2020 fatal work zone crashes, up 32% from 2019.
- *Be Careful Around Large Vehicles.* Large vehicles can be harder to maneuver and slower to respond, so avoid making sudden lane changes in front of trucks or buses and look out for construction vehicles.
- *Be Prepared for Sudden Stops.* Work zones can cause congestion, delays and traffic queues. Be alert and watch for sudden stops. In 2020, 20% of all fatal work zone crashes involved rear-end collisions.
- *Read the Signs.* Signs provide guidance to road users of traffic laws or regulations within the work zones.

Sources: National Safety Council

US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

