

Support Safer Highway Work Zones – Implementing Automated Work Zone Speed Enforcement in Oregon

Vote YES on SB 711

Highway Work Zones (ORS 811.230) means an area identified by advance warning where road construction, repair or maintenance work is being done by highway workers on or adjacent to a highway, regardless of whether highway workers are actually present.

In 2022, 891 people were killed and 37,701 people were injured in work zone crashes nationwide. [1] The overwhelming majority of people injured in work zones are drivers, their passengers or nearby pedestrians. Causes of crashes in work zones are often attributed to: following too closely, excessive speed and inattentive or distracted driving.

Oregon has seen a steady increase in the number of crashes and fatalities in work zones since the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that more needs to be done to shift driver behavior and reduce speeds in work zones to minimize the risk of injuries and fatalities, especially while highway workers are present in a work zone where traffic patterns may have shifted, speeds have reduced and trucks or other heavy equipment may be present (see table below for recent Oregon work zone crash data).

	Fatalities (People)	Serious Injuries (people)	Total WZ Crashes	Fatal Injury Crashes	Non-Fatal Injury Crashes
2023*	10	43	584	8	352
2022	7	34	358	7	226
2021**	4	15	314	4	173
2020**	4	8	236	3	132
2019	4	18	292	3	182
2018	7	15	395	7	246
2017	3	21	426	3	133

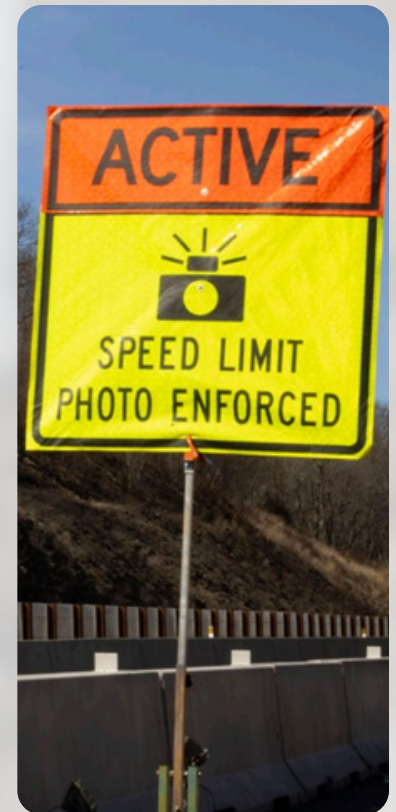


Table: Oregon Work Zone crashes on state highways, 2017-2023 [2]

[1] <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/motor-vehicle-safety-issues/work-zones/>

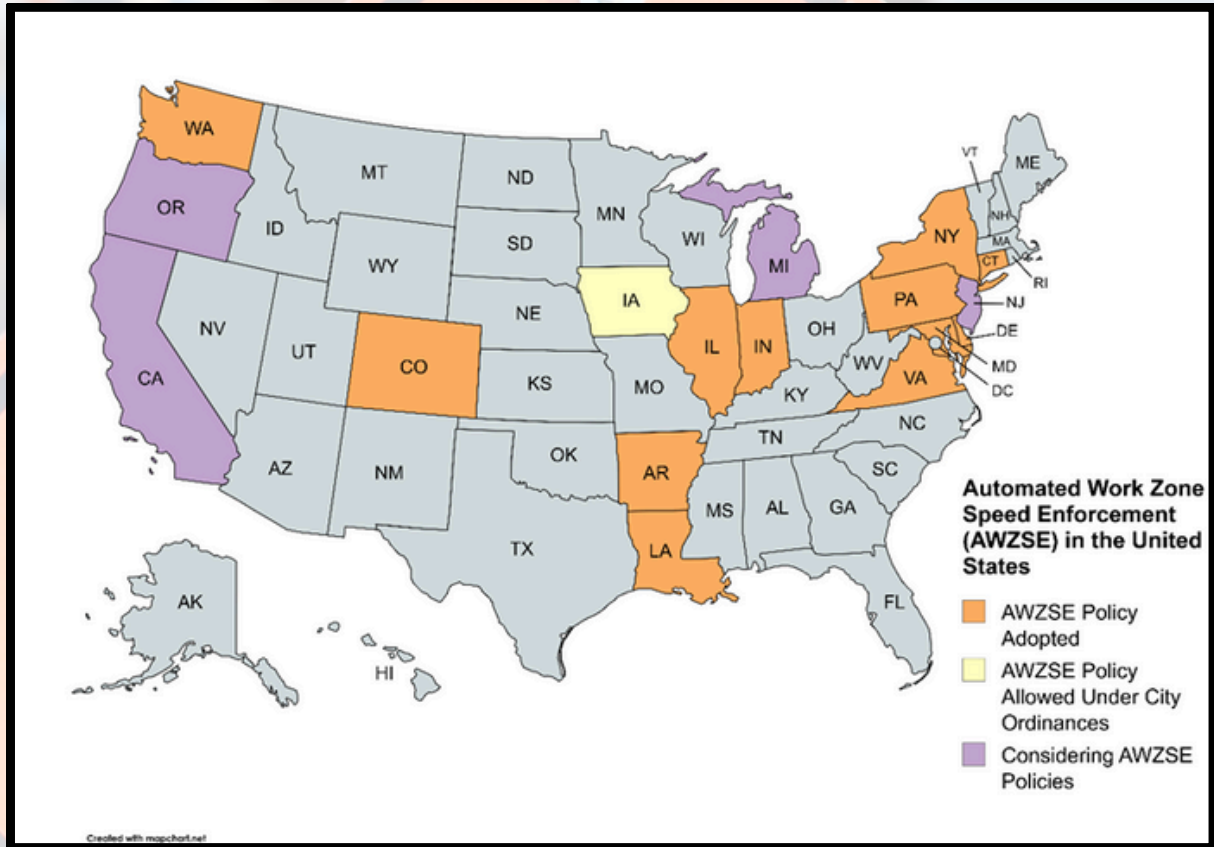
[2] <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDOT/bulletins/395999d>

*2023 preliminary data provided by ODOT Crash Analysis and Reporting Unit (Data for 2023 is preliminary and is subject to change)

**2020-2021 saw less drivers on the roads during the COVID-19 pandemic

For more information, please contact Lorne Bulling, Kirsten Adams, or Rich Angstrom.

Automated Work Zone Speed Enforcement (AWZSE) laws have been adopted in 13 states to date, with additional states considering legislation presently to enforce reduced speeds in work zones while promoting safety in work zones for both highway construction workers and motorists. States who have adopted AWZSE policies have seen a reduction in the number of accidents and fatalities in work zones since adoption, saving the lives of highway workers and travelers.[3]



Oregon’s Proposed AWZSE Policy would establish a highway worker photo radar program and operate photo radar units within an active highway work zone on state highways. The photo radar units may only be operated in the area within the highway work zone when highway workers are present. A sign must be posted within one mile of the location of the photo radar unit announcing the use of the photo radar. All amounts received from citations are first used for the costs of the highway worker photo radar program. Additional revenue generated that exceeds program costs shall be used for traffic safety purposes determined by the Oregon Department of Transportation in consultation with Oregon State Police, including but not limited to costs associated with speed enforcement in highway work zones.



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[3] <https://pavementnetwork.com/speed-cameras-keep-workers-safe-in-work-zones/>