

SAFETY SENSE

AUGUST 2007

Editor's note: BE SURE TO PASS EACH ISSUE OF THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO EVERYONE WITH SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES AT YOUR COMPANY.

Reduce the Risk of a Roadway Work Zone Fatality

KEY POINTS:

- In 2005, 1,074 people in the United States were killed in motor vehicle-related crashes in highway construction/maintenance zones.
- In one incident in Arizona last September, a vehicle crashed into a truck-trailer, then veered onto the shoulder of the freeway, striking a 23-year-old landscape worker from Mexico. He died instantly.
- Landscape contractors who work on or near roadways are at high risk of serious injury or death.
- It's critical to take steps to train your crews in work-zone safety.

Employer's Roadway Work Zone Safety Checklist

- ✓ Know that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is paying close attention to the safety of highway work-zone crews.
- ✓ Require your crew leaders to conduct a five- to 10-minute "tailgate" safety session at the work site at the start of each day. This is important because work-zone hazards often change from one day to the next.
- ✓ Provide hard hats with reflectors (for night work), high-visibility reflective vests, safety glasses, hearing protection, and other appropriate protective equipment.

- ✓ Ensure that your crews use cones or barrels and warning signs for vehicle and equipment entrances.
- ✓ Check vehicles and equipment that will be used at night to make sure they have reflective tape and adequate lighting, such as revolving amber lights.
- ✓ Check the [National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse](#) for more information on roadway work-zone safety.

Work Zone Safety Tips for Crews

- Always use the safety equipment provided when you work on or near roadways. This includes safety cones or barrels and warning signs for equipment entrances.
- Make eye contact with equipment operators when you cross in front of them or behind them. Don't assume that they will be able to see you.
- Use the personal protective equipment (PPE) that is provided. This includes hard hats, high-visibility vests, safety glasses, hearing protection, and other PPE.
- Be careful where you park equipment or vehicles. Do not block road signage.
- Be on the constant lookout for new hazards, including moving vehicles.

Protect Your Workers from Lightning Strikes

KEY POINTS:

- In 2006, federal officials confirmed 43 deaths and 172 serious injuries due to lightning strikes.
- The majority of injuries and deaths from lightning occur during the summer months.
- Although Florida is known as the “lightning capital of the world,” fatal lightning strikes occur throughout the United States.
- The [National Lightning Safety Institute](#), the [National Weather Service – Lightning Safety](#), and [Struck by Lightning](#) are among the excellent resources on lightning safety.

Lightning Safety Dos and Don'ts

DO —

- Make sure your crews know what to do in the event of a lightning storm.
- Designate “safe shelters.” Relay that information to all employees.
- Know that lightning most often strikes between noon and 6 p.m.

DON'T —

- Hesitate to assist someone who has been struck by lightning. That person will NOT carry an electrical charge.
- Send workers out on mowers or other open equipment during a storm.
- Have workers seek shelter in small or partially enclosed buildings.

Crew Members' Lightning Safety Checklist

- ✓ Do NOT take shelter from lightning on high ground or under a tall, isolated tree.
- ✓ Know that the best place to take shelter is inside a sturdy, permanently constructed building. Stay away from open windows or doors, water, and electrical appliances, including the telephone.
- ✓ Avoid all metal. This includes electrical fences, metal pipes, telephone poles, power tools, or metal parts of vehicles or equipment. Metal conducts electricity.
- ✓ If you are in a truck with an enclosed cab or are operating heavy, enclosed equipment, turn the motor off, close all doors and windows, and stay inside until lightning is no longer a threat. Do not use any electronic devices.

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