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Home

Customer Services

- › [Ways to Pay Your Bill](#)
- › [Account Information](#)
- › [Customer Assistance](#)
- › [Service Line Protection Program](#)
- › [Water Rates](#)
- › [Property Managers & Trade Professionals](#)

Water Utilities

- › [Drinking Water](#)
- › [Wastewater](#)
- › [Stormwater](#)
- › [Harbor Water](#)
- › [Long Term Control Plan](#)

The Watershed

- › [Watershed Protection](#)
- › [Watershed Recreation](#)

Citywide Initiatives

- › [Regulatory Reform](#)
- › [Environmental Education](#)
- › [Conservation Programs](#)
- › [Air Pollution Control](#)
- › [Noise Codes & Complaints](#)

Business and Professionals

- › [Forms & Permits](#)
- › [Economic Development Unit](#)
- › [Doing Business with DEP](#)
- › [Asbestos Abatement](#)
- › [Construction, Demolition & Abatement](#)

About DEP

- › [Inside DEP](#)
- › [News](#)
- DEP Featured In...
- Stories from DEP
- Press Releases
- Public Notices
- Testimony & Public Comments

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NYC DOT and DEP Commissioners and Partners Encourage Safe Driving in and Around Work Zones Citywide as Part of National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 7-11

Work Zone safety campaign underscores urgent need to protect crews maintaining infrastructure on roads, bridges, sidewalks and tunnels

New York City's Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Polly Trottenberg and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd today announced the launch of the agency's new and improved Zone Watch program as part of National Work Zone Awareness week, which is being observed from April 7-11. The enhanced program will include nine camera-equipped trailers designed to better document and deter reckless driving through work zones and aligns with Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero initiative to make streets safer for everyone.

In New York City, nearly two dozen city DOT workers have been injured in work zone incidents since 2009 and seven died from work zone-related events during the past two decades. While investing in this mobile-camera technology better protects crews, everyone on the streets benefit—85% of those killed in work zones are motorists or passengers.

The Commissioners unveiled the first pair of new Zone Watch trailers alongside Council Member Menchaca; Walter Jones, president New York South/East region; Denise Richardson, managing director of the General Contractors Association of NY; Mike Ruiz, director of Community and Customer Management, National Grid; Andrea Schmitz, VP for Environment, Health and Safety, Con Edison; Michael Coppola, president, Local 1157 / DOT Supervisory Employees; and Michael DeMarco, president, Local 1455 / Traffic Employees, who joined a DOT roadway crew in their work zone at 41st Street and Sixth Avenue in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

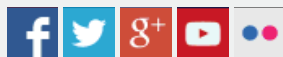
"Dangerous driving in work zones threatens the lives of the men and women who maintain our streets, bridges and other infrastructure," said **DOT Commissioner Trottenberg**. "Vision Zero brings the need for safer streets into sharper focus. While every motorist needs to do their part by slowing down, our enhanced Zone Watch program is another important tool to protect our crews."

"The men and women who build and maintain the infrastructure that makes life in New York City possible deserve a safe working environment," said **DEP Commissioner Lloyd**. "At DEP, we provide our employees with the training and experience to safely work on our streets, but we need the public's help to prevent accidents and injuries."

More Information

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- › [Capital Projects](#)
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- › [A to Z Index](#)
- › [Contact Us](#)



"I want to thank the DOT and the Mayor's office for supporting the Work Zone Safety Act, this legislation will ensure that those who would put working people in harm's way will be held accountable," **said State Senator Diane Savino**. "I am confident that the Senate will take this bill up and pass it again this session and we hope that the Assembly will also so the Governor can sign this important safety legislation."

"Men and women fixing our roads shouldn't have their lives at risk every time they go to work," said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. "I applaud Mayor de Blasio, along with Senator Savino, Assemblymember Cusick, and Commissioner Trottenberg for this initiative. I look forward to continuing to work with the Mayor, Commissioner Trottenberg, and Assemblymember Kavanagh to crack down on all careless driving by increasing the enforcement of Hayley and Diego's Law."

"As we bring attention to National Work Zone Awareness week designated to remind motorists to slow down in roadway construction areas, it is important to note that this effort to educate the public is an important step in reducing fatalities," **said Assemblyman Michael Cusick**. "I am the sponsor of A.7877, which would establish tougher penalties and serve as a deterrent for driving recklessly in a highway construction zone. In conjunction with the National Awareness week, I am calling for action on implementing stiffer penalties for those who ignore speed zones in these areas. It is vital that we protect those who work to make our roads safe."

"We need to take all reasonable steps to prevent crashes that injure or kill New Yorkers, whether they are pedestrians, cyclists, road workers or vehicle occupants," **said Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh**. "For years, I've worked for new laws and policy changes that will help accomplish this, including my bill with Senator Squadron to give police and prosecutors better tools to hold careless drivers accountable. I'm happy to join Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Trottenberg as we double down on our goal of getting to zero traffic deaths and serious injuries."

In addition to the nine custom trailers, DOT will also purchase additional camera equipment that can be mounted to trucks. These high-tech upgrades follow a pilot program introduced last April to record footage that could be used as evidence for work zone intrusions. Clear signage and speed boards will alert motorists to their speeds and remind them that the area is being monitored by video.

"Our teams meet every day and night on the streets and highways of the City, so it is only fitting that we meet here today to show our support and concern for the important and critical work they and we all do for the City of New York," **said Walter Jones, president New York South/East region, Verizon**. "Standing together helps bring awareness to the public and drivers of their important work."

"Our workers are in harm's way 24 hours a day building and rebuilding our roads and bridges," **said Denise Richardson, managing director of the General Contractors Association of NY** which represents the city's heavy construction industry. "And while we as an industry are constantly focused on ways to ensure their safety, their safety frequently depends on something beyond our control—the motoring public obeying speed limits and traffic laws."

"Con Edison considers the safety of our workers and the public our top priority," **said Andrea Schmitz, Vice President for Environment, Health and Safety, Con Edison**. "We maintain well-marked work areas to help protect our employees in the street, as well as nearby drivers and pedestrians. We are proud to support National Work Zone Awareness week, which spotlights the hazards faced by all the men and women who build New York City's infrastructure. We are also proud to support the City's "Vision Zero" policy to eliminate serious pedestrian injuries and fatalities."

"Although National Grid crews are trained in work zone safety, wear high-visibility clothing, and post warning signs near work sites, the areas require

heightened attention from drivers,” said **Mike Ruiz, Director Community and Customer Management, National Grid**. “National Grid urges motorists to use extreme caution in work zones and to pay attention to warning signs. We join DOT, DEP and other utilities in highlighting this important safety message, the more drivers are aware we all can get home safely.”

“I hope that through events like this , motorist start to realize that there are fathers , mothers sisters and brothers in these work zones and they deserve to go home to their families at the end of the day,” said **Michael Coppola, President, Local 1157, DOT Supervisory Employees**.

“It is an honor for my local union 1455 (NYC Traffic Employees) to be partners with the Commissioner and all the folks at DOT on this very important issue of Work Zone Safety Awareness week,” said **Michael DeMarco, President, Local 1455 Traffic Employees**. “Because ultimately our goals and mission are the same, that is to keep my members and their employee’ as safe as they could possibly be at all times.”

As part of National Work Zone Awareness, DOT re-launched its safety campaign this year with support from the Headquarters and Locals 376, 983, 1157 and 1455 of District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO; International Union of Operating Engineers Local 15; and Service Employees International Union Local 246. The ads feature the widow of city DOT roadway repairer Nicholas (“Nicky”) Antico who sustained fatal injuries after a motorist sped through his work zone in Staten Island as well as others who lost a loved one to work-zone crashes. Billboards in Albany and New York City now carry the ads. DOT staff also are distributing information at various locations citywide, including the Whitehall Staten Island Ferry terminal and at various New York State Department of Motor Vehicle facilities.

For information about work zone safety, Vision Zero and other efforts, visit nyc.gov/dot or nyc.gov/visionzero.

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