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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Children of Caltrans Workers Implore Drivers: “Be Work Zone Alert”



SACRAMENTO—Happy children hug their loved ones goodbye each morning, entrusting drivers with the safety of their parents and grandparents as they maintain the state’s highway system. Today Caltrans, along with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), California Highway Patrol (CHP), and the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), announces the new “Be Work Zone Alert” public awareness campaign to remind drivers to slow down when passing highway workers.

“Our children depend on your safe driving all day, every day,” said Elissa Konove, Undersecretary of the California State Transportation Agency. “This campaign aims to protect highway workers who work inches from traffic daily to maintain our state’s transportation system.”

The department’s work to maintain and improve the system that empowers Californians to move around their state relies on these brave Californians’ service. But public servant is only their secondary job—many are also moms, dads, and grandparents. As the department and our partners strive Toward Zero Deaths, Caltrans aims to reduce deaths of workers in the line of duty. Billboards and radio spots will spread across California, to put a face to the families that depend on an alert traveling public.

“Being a transportation worker is one of the most hazardous professions in the nation,” said Laurie Berman, Director of Caltrans. “We hope this campaign will move every Californian to consider the dangers the brave men and women of the Department face every single day and slow down.”

Your mindfulness is the key to reuniting these families every single day. Not just these highway workers' lives are on the line—games of tag, catch, hide and seek, and years of happiness and memories are too.

“Mere seconds of inattention or distraction can be destructive to the lives of so many people,” said Warren Stanley, Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol (CHP). “The CHP is a proud partner of Caltrans and hopes efforts like this one reduce the risks to everyone on our roadways.”

California’s “Move Over” law requires all drivers to move over a lane if safe to do so, or slow down when they see amber flashing lights on Caltrans vehicles, or other emergency vehicles and tow trucks. Highway construction is one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States, and this law is a crucial tool to protect those on the road. In 2018, more than 7,000 work-zone collisions occurred on California roadways. About 2,300 resulted in injuries, and 46 involved a fatality. Nationally drivers and passengers account for 85 percent of the people who are killed in work zones.

Since 1921, 189 Caltrans employees have been killed on the job, and one of the biggest hazards to them and anyone working on the roads is from motorists who do not exercise caution. Those 189 employees represent scores of families torn apart.

“We live in a fast-paced world, but need to slow down on the road, particularly when highway workers are out trying to do their job,” OTS Director Rhonda Craft said. “This campaign is intended to remind drivers of the dangers highway workers face every day and be mindful of their presence.”

The campaign is funded with highway maintenance funds and a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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