



See which Michigan communities have the most work zone crashes

By Justin Hicks, 4/21/24

Last spring, [Rene Rangel Jr.](#), 58, was hit by a vehicle and killed while working in a road construction zone in Southwest Michigan.

Weeks later, 70-year-old [James Lockwood](#) was fatally struck while directing traffic through a road work area in Ingham County.

The two men were among at least 20 individuals killed in Michigan work zones last year. That's more than the 10-year average of 17.7 fatalities per year.

In total, the state reported 7,237 work zone vehicle crashes in 2023, resulting in 1,896 injuries, according to preliminary data from the state Department of Transportation.

Last year's totals were slight improvements from 2022. Work zone crashes were down 2.3%, while injuries were down 3.6% and total fatalities were down 13% (23 in 2022, 20 in 2023).

However, other than 2022, construction zones proved more dangerous for workers in 2023 than any other year going back at least 14 years.

Rob Coppersmith, executive vice president of the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association, said not enough is being done to protect Michiganders "on both sides of the orange barrel."

Not surprisingly, the counties with the most work zone crashes in 2022 were those with the highest population counts.

But when accounting for population differences, no community had more work zone crashes per 10,000 residents than Arenac County. The northeast county, home to Standish and Au Gres, had 36 work zone crashes, or 24 per 10,000 people.

Jackson County followed with 17 work zone crashes per 10,000 residents. Rounding out the top five were Macomb (13 per 10,000), Ingham (13) and Kalamazoo (12).

Below is a map of Michigan's 2022 work zone crash data, as reported by Michigan State Police. Data for 2023 should be available this summer.

Ten counties had no work zone crashes to report. Mostly located in Northern Michigan, they included Charlevoix, Gladwin, Keweenaw, Lake, Leelanau, Luce, Missaukee, Montmorency, Oscoda, and Presque Isle.



The same data from the map above can be viewed in the database below. Search a county or select the different column headers to rearrange the data.

Coppersmith, with the construction trade association, wants Michigan to become the 24th state to add cameras and automated speed enforcement to work zones to better enforce speed limits and hold drivers accountable.

“Speed cameras in work zones are a proven tool for reducing crashes and fatalities,” he said in a prepared statement.

Last summer, the Michigan House passed a pair of bills -- HB 4132 and 4133 -- that would allow for automated speed cameras in work zones, as long as a warning sign was placed 1 mile before the enforcement zone.

Drivers caught traveling 10 mph or more over the posted limit could face mailed sanctions ranging from a written warning to a fine up to \$300. Fines would double in the case of a crash.

The proposals were untouched upon arrival in the Senate until March 20, when they were moved from the Senate’s Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to the Committee of the Whole. If they are passed in the Senate, they’ll go to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer for final approval.

“We hope the Michigan Legislature acts quickly to help reduce deaths and protect our work zones by passing this bipartisan legislation,” Coppersmith said.

Earlier this week, the man who struck Rangel Jr. on CR 681 in Arlington Township was sentenced to a minimum of seven years and two months in prison, and a maximum of 15 years, for operating a vehicle in a work zone causing death.

Van Buren County Circuit Judge Kathleen M. Brickley told [Logan Brown, 31](#), that she hopes the sentence will prompt others to approach construction zones more cautiously out of concern for those working.