

Senate Bill 155, An Act Requiring Training in Highway Work Zone Safety
Transportation Committee
March 4, 2009

training programs conducted or administered by state or local police departments and the Police Officer Standards and Training Council provide a minimum of two hours of training on highway work zone safety. Requiring standardized training in work zone safety for police departments will ensure that public safety personnel across the state working in a zone will receive similar training. It will also help save the lives of all those performing activities in and around highway work zones.

Police officers should have basic training in work zone safety requirements to help recognize possible deficiencies and enforce the traffic laws within a work zone. A highway work zone is a dangerous area that leaves very little room for error and requires a great deal of attention for those traveling through and working in it. A police officer presence in a work zone is one of the most important deterrents to reckless driving and ensures additional safety for the workers. This role is so important that we have instructed our employees not to proceed into the work zone without police presence. If they don't show up, we don't work.

To clarify, the bill does not require additional training. It simply specifies that basic or review police training programs conducted or administered by municipal police departments must provide a minimum of two hours of training on highway work zone safety. This would not be in additional hours, but in conjunction with existing hours of training. While it does require police departments to develop a two-hour curriculum on work zone safety, they could do so in consultation with the Highway Work Zone Safety Advisory Council or use resources that have already been developed by ARTBA (American Road & Transportation Builders Association) or NHTSA.

Education is the key component to the bill and will help officers recognize, identify, and ensure the correction of deficiencies to reduce the risk of workers and the public traveling through work zones. This bill would be a positive step in reducing the risk to all those involved in supporting and working on Connecticut's highways.

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Tilcon CT is a major construction company in the State of Connecticut that employs approximately 800 people. In 2008, Tilcon CT worked approximately 265,959 hours on Connecticut's roadways to improve the state's highway system. This work included working with other agencies such as the state DOT, State and local police and municipalities. The roadway construction work is conducted in an environment open to the elements and requires personal protection equipment and properly positioned engineering controls to keep workers safe.

Based on historical accident information from the NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration):

- In 2006, 1,010 people sustained fatal injuries in traffic crashes in work zones.
- More than 40,000 people are injured each year as a result of motor vehicle crashes in work zones.
- Approximately half of all fatal work zone crashes occurred during the day.
- More than two times as many fatal work zone crashes occurred on weekdays as on weekends.
- Fatal work zone crashes occurred most often in the summer and the fall.
- During the 1995 to 2002 period, 844 workers were killed while working at a road construction site. During this same period, there were 9,325 deaths in the construction industry. The 844 worker deaths in road construction represent 9% of all deaths in construction. More than half of these fatalities were attributable to a worker being struck by a vehicle or mobile equipment.

Senate Bill 155, an Act Requiring Training in Highway Work Zone Safety, would require training on safe driving practices in highway work zones as part of driver education, and training of police officers in highway work zone safety. Tilcon CT **supports** Senate Bill 155 and hopes that the Transportation Committee will also agree and approve the bill.

Senate Bill 155 is a logical step in helping us achieve a safer work environment for our employees. It requires new drivers to be educated on the responsibilities of a motor vehicle operator in a highway work zone, the risks associated with unsafe driving in a highway work zone to highway workers or state or local public safety officers, and the penalties for violating the new law. The bill also requires that basic or review police