



2/10/2022

To: Senate Committee on Transportation

RE: Lighted Paddles and Work Zone Safety

Associated General Contractors of Vermont (AGC/VT) is the trade organization for contractors and construction workers in Vermont. We provide industry specific training, Occupational and Safety Health Administration (OSHA) and Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) certifications and are home to nationally recognized safety instruction. Our members employ 15,000-20,000 in Vermont annually with careers offering wages and benefits well above Vermont's livable wage. Our members work directly with state agencies including the VTRANS, Building and General Services and Department of Labor to enhance delivery of service to the state.

Work zone safety has been a priority for AGC/VT members for quite some time. With uncountable near misses, aggressive drivers, distracted drivers, and deaths in work zones which include both the travelling public and workers its clear we have a problem. Attached you will find statistics from VTRANS showing a staggering increase in deaths on our highways and almost half involved excessive speed. AGC/VT has been working on several initiatives including increasing training requirements for workers, working with engineers to improve traffic patterns in work zones, encouraging a 4th duty in the state specifications manual allowing police officers to enforce traffic laws within work zones, and participating in a pilot study to include automated speed safety signs in work zones.

The Senate Committee on Transportation resolved to perform a pilot program to judge the efficacy of lighted Start/Stop flagger paddles with LED lights for improved visibility. Understanding that the pilot program has only one out of two seasons we are currently awaiting complete results. Although complete results have not been received the current report shows that the signs may add another burden to busy workers while not providing the significant increase in safety desired.

The main concern of AGC/VT members in addition to increased costs and constant charging of batteries 3 times per day per sign is breakage and the ability to complete the work of the day. These signs can be broken easily by accident or by purpose and if work inside the zone requires a lighted paddle, employers and VTRANS may have to negotiate extensions and increased pay items due to the delays.

For AGC/VT to support using the signs we would have to see all flaggers, not just VTRANS projects, using the lighted paddles so the travelling public would still take non lighted signs seriously in municipal, utility, and other work. The VTRANS specifications manual must include a provision that the day must start with an operational sign but if the lights or battery fail it can be used for the remainder of the day unlit so business can continue. It would need to be clear that each job "owners" must fund multiple batteries and signs with a clear line to payment in contracts. The goal is to create an even playing field among contractors and promote business continuity in work zones.

As of **February 7** in each calendar year shown:

Year	Fatalities (People)	Fatal Crashes
2022	5	5
2021	3	3
2020	4	4
2019	2	2
2018	3	3

Fatal Crash Data	2022*	2021*	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total Fatal Crashes	5	69	57	44	61	64
Total Fatalities (People)	5	74	61	47	69	70
Double Fatality Crashes	0	5	4	3	8	3
Triple Fatality Crashes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quadruple Fatality Crashes	0	0	0	0	0	1
Operators Suspected as Driving under the Influence of Alcohol Only	0	10	11	5	5	6
Operators Suspected as Driving under the Influence of Drugs Only	0	18	14	15	13	18
Operators Suspected as Driving under the Influence of both Alcohol & Drugs	0	12	6	2	10	11
Active Cannabis - Delta 9 THC Confirmed**	0	21	12	13	14	16
Operators Suspected of Speeding	2	24	15	14	22	27
Operators with Suspended License/ No License	0	7	13	5	7	11
Junior License Operators involved in fatal crashes	0	3	2	1	4	2
"Older Drivers" involved in fatal Crashes (Older Driver is defined as any person age 65 or older. & "involved" does not imply "fault")	2	19	15	16	14	15
Crashes involving a Large Truck/Bus ("involving" does not imply "fault")	1	4	4	10	6	3
Motorcyclist Fatalities	0	16	10	8	7	13

2021 data is as of the date of this report. These numbers are subject to change.

**Active Cannabis - Delta-9 THC Confirmed is counted in the number of operators that had drugs only or alcohol & drugs.

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AGC/VT

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