



NEWS RELEASE

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District 7: Los Angeles & Ventura Counties
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALTRANS REMEMBERS THE FALLEN, URGES SAFETY AT WORKERS' MEMORIAL EVENT

LOS ANGELES – California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) employees and guests took a moment out of their day to recognize and remember District 7 workers killed on the job at a Workers' Memorial event today.

Statewide, Caltrans has lost 180 employees since 1924, when the Department began keeping records of such fatalities. The 32 workers recognized were from District 7, covering Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Recently, Caltrans workers Shawn Baker, 50, of Weed, and Joseph "Robert" Jones, 40, of Montague, died on April 24 during a rock scaling operation on Highway 96, west of Yreka, in Northern California were also remembered.

"We will never forget our fallen and we will never forget the risks we take every day and night working within a few feet or inches of vehicles zipping by," said District 7 Director Michael Miles. "Caltrans employees and motorists must remember those that you will leave behind if you become complacent or careless about your safety and the safety of those around you."

On average, 1,000 Caltrans vehicles are hit on the highways each year. Every year more than 1,000 people nationwide die in highway work zone crashes and more than 40,000 people are injured. As a result of these dangers, fines for speeding in work zones have increased to \$1,000 or more.

"This is always a sad occasion and one we all wish was unnecessary. Though I am glad to say that no District 7 employees were killed in the line-of-duty in the past eight years, we mourn the loss of two workers in Northern California," said Miles.

Since the *Slow For the Cone Zone* campaign started in 1999, California highway fatalities have decreased 63 percent.

The *Move Over* campaign began in 2011 to increase motorists awareness of the law that requires drivers to move over a lane if safe to do so, or slow down, when passing vehicles with flashing amber lights. One hundred *Move Over* signs are being installed statewide to promote safety for Caltrans and construction workers on the roadside.

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California is currently seeing the most freeway construction in years, 664 projects statewide (\$12.4 billion) and 114 projects (\$2.1 billion) in District 7, therefore motorists should be mindful of construction workers in work zones as well.

“As long as there are motorists who are complacent, inattentive, impaired, and reckless, all motorists and highway workers will continue to be at risk,” Miles added. “It’s up to each and every motorist to end the vicious and dangerous cycle, and *Slow For The Cone Zone* and *Move Over*.”

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