# Work Zone Data Issues:
# Work Zone Incidents are Not Being Classified as WZ Related

The Work Zone label ("WRK_ZONE") is not assigned rigorously in the NHTSA FARS and CRSS datasets. As a result, work zone statistics such as "Estimated Crashes", "Estimated Injuries", "Fatalities", and "Pedestrian-Involved Fatalities" are understated.

## Examples of Missing "Work Zone" Labels

### Example 1: Colorado I-70 Brighton Blvd to Chambers Road Work Zone

- $1.2 billion dollar project
- Work Zone Geofence
  - Brighton Blvd (latitude, longitude): 39.780, -104.966
  - Chambers Road (latitude, longitude): 39.77, -104.81
- Timeline:
  - Friday, Aug 3, 2018 - Ground breaking ceremony & preparation begins.
  - August 15, 2018 – 1 fatality on I-70 less than 1.4 miles west of work zone (FARS database case id number "ST_CASE" 80346).
  - Sept 7, 2018 – 1 fatality on I-70 less than 1 mile east of work zone (FARS database case id number "ST_CASE" 80396).
  - Sept 22, 2018 – 1 fatality on I-70 <u>inside</u> work zone geofence (FARS database case id number "ST_CASE" 80499).
  - Sept 22, 2018 – 1 fatality on I-70 <u>inside</u> work zone geofence (FARS database case id number "ST_CASE" 80416).
- In total, 4 fatalities inside or just outside work zone geofence within 60 days of ground breaking. These fatalities appear in the FARS database, but are missing the "Work Zone" identifier and are therefore, not counted in the total work zone "Fatalities" statistic.
- Beginning in January 2018, Colorado's police crash report format also changed for the first time since 2006. CDOT highlighted to officers in the update announcement several crash report fields as "most critical" including location, driver contributing factors, intersection movements, and follow-on or secondary crashes (see section "The Most Critical Crash Report Fields", [1]).

## Example 2: State DOT Workers

Three Alabama state DOT workers were struck, but the "Work Zone" label was not properly reported for the accident (WRK_ZONE is 0, false) as shown below in Figure 1 and Figure 2.



**Figure 1 – Example 2 Screenshot of NHTSA FARS Dataset showing missing "Work Zone" label where three Alabama DOT workers were struck.**

# UPDATE: Road Worker Dies After Being Struck by Vehicle, Driver Arrested

The Montgomery Police Department is investigating an afternoon car crash involving three pedestrians that resulted in one death and two non-life-threatening injuries.

On Tuesday, October 31, around 11:30 a.m., Montgomery Police and Fire Medics responded to the 4000 block of Atlanta Highway in reference to three pedestrians being struck by a vehicle.

Leo Fournier, 62, of Montgomery, sustained life-threatening injuries and was transported to Jackson Hospital where he was later pronounced dead. The two other adult male pedestrians were transported to a local hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries.

The driver of the vehicle, a 2005 Buick LaSabre, was not injured and was taken into custody with charges pending.

MPD's investigation indicates that the Buick LaSabre was traveling the wrong way in the Eastbound lanes of Atlanta Highway when it left the roadway and struck the three pedestrians who were part of a survey crew with the Alabama Department of Transportation.

MPD's investigation is continuing and no further information is available for release at this time.

**Figure 2 - News article reporting that three Alabama DOT workers were struck on October 31, 2017. The three workers were part of a survey crew.**

# References

[1] "DR 3447 Crash Form Changes, DOCUMENT FILE: 20181119-DR 3447 CHANGES.DOCX,"
State of Colorado, 20 November 2018. [Online]. Available:
https://www.codot.gov/about/committees/strac/dr3447-folder/using-the-dr3447/dr3447-changes.