Road Work Safety Fatality File



A Highway Worker Dies When Struck by a Speeding Vehicle While Picking up Cones on an Interstate Highway

Abstract:

A 27-year-old general laborer died when a speeding vehicle struck him as he picked up traffic cones at a construction site on an interstate highway. The speed limit on this interstate highway was 70 mph. The victim was in a man-bucket attached to the rear of a staked flatbed traffic control truck. This truck was traveling in reverse in the number three lane of a four-lane highway as the victim was picking up the cones between the numbers three and four lanes and placing them on the bed of the truck. A speeding vehicle knocked down over 300 feet of traffic cones before colliding with the rear of the traffic control truck, which was equipped with flashing lights and an arrow board. There was no traffic truck with an impact attenuator between the speeding vehicle and the traffic control truck to prevent the collision. Visibility at the time of the incident was limited due to the darkness at 3:45 a.m. The traffic control plan did not require reduction of the speed limit. Therefore, traffic continued to travel at the same limit despite the fact that three of the four lanes were closed for construction. There were no law enforcement vehicles assigned to the construction site at the time of this incident.

The CA/FACE investigator determined that, in order to prevent future occurrences, employers should, as part of their Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP), develop procedures with the State’s Department of Transportation that will:

- Reduce the speed limit in construction work zones on interstate highways with high speed and high volume.
- Require the availability of traffic trucks with impact attenuators for construction work zones on interstate highways with high speed and high volume.
- Ensure Highway Patrol presence when putting down and picking up traffic cones in close proximity to speeding traffic on interstate highways with high speed and high volume.
- Ensure artificial lighting is used to improve visibility of work crews to passing traffic for night construction work zones on interstate highways with high speed and high volume.