

# Event Planning Guide

April 17-21, 2023

You **play a role in** work zone safety.



## OVERVIEW

**ATSSA** prepared this **NWZAW Event Planning Guide** to help you plan and host an NWZAW event.

### **This document includes:**

- Tips on how to find the right location for the kickoff event, and sample tasks for the event support team.
- Who to invite to the event, and tips on how to make the event special.
- Sample invitations, examples of opening and closing remarks, and a sample schedule for the kickoff event.
- Community outreach ideas to increase awareness about NWZAW events.

Please refer to the **NWZAW Promotion Guide** to learn more about how to work with the media and review sample social media posts to promote your event via social media.

National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW), in its 23rd year, is a nationwide public awareness campaign that spreads the message that everyone shares the responsibility for work zone safety. NWZAW is April 17-21 in 2023.

During NWZAW, a state department of transportation (DOT) serves as host and holds a national media kickoff event. In addition, ATSSA chapters, public agencies, companies, organizations and individuals across the country can hold individual events and take part in Go Orange Day and all NWZAW-related events. Groups directly involved in the roadway industry also hold Work Zone Safety Training Day to provide safety training to workers.

This guide serves as a tool for holding an event to raise awareness of NWZAW.

Thank you for your participation!

## **SUMMARY OF 2023 EVENTS**

- National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 17-21
- Work Safety Training Day, Monday, April 17
- National kickoff event, Tuesday, April 18
- Go Orange Day, Wednesday, April 19
- Social media storm, Thursday, April 20
- Moment of Silence, Friday, April 21

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# KICKOFF EVENT PLANNER

The purpose of the kickoff event is to reach out to community leaders, the media and the general public to generate awareness about the importance of work zone safety. A national event is held each year. Local events are encouraged as well. By hosting an event, you can raise awareness about NWZAW and Go Orange Day and make a difference when it comes to saving lives on the nation's roadways.

Below are suggested steps for a local kickoff event.

## STEP ONE: ELECT A COORDINATOR

Elect a coordinator and form a small committee for the event. That way one person can be the point of contact for planning and will have assistance within the committee.

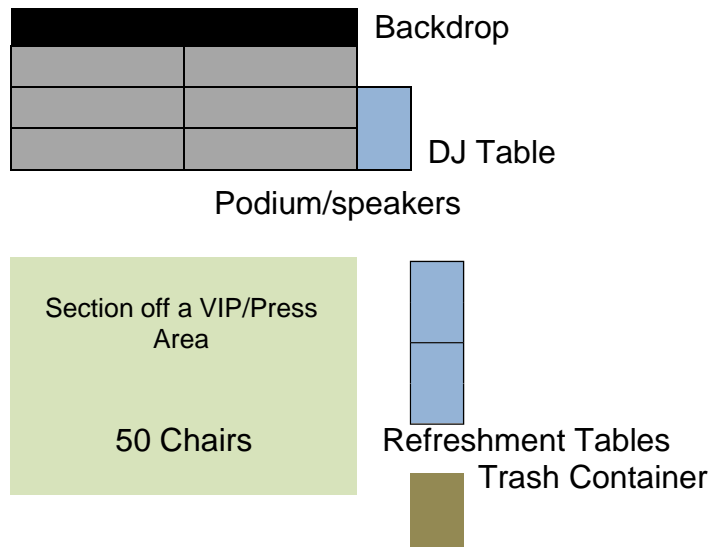
## STEP TWO: SECURE A KICKOFF LOCATION

*Note: Be sure to check all health guidelines with local, state and federal (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)) health departments for any issues to address.*

**Where:** A facility that is open to the public. Hosting an event at a government center, welcome center or contractor facility is a great way to draw industry support and attendance. Other options include a library, park, shopping mall or another gathering place. Another option is a large space near a roadway work zone, if it is safe for media and the general public to access. Holding the kickoff event in a public location helps spread the word about NWZAW to a larger audience.

- Meet with the contact for the space you intend to use.
- Explain the purpose of the event and how it will drive positive media attention to the property. Allow contractors and manufacturers to promote their companies in a way that's related to work zone safety.
- Review the event timeframe including access to the area for setup, event length, breakdown. For optimal media presence, keep the event under an hour but allow for people to linger afterward.
- Explain your setup requirements (See below.)
- Ask if there is a fee. Since the event drives traffic and the media to the site, there may not be a fee.

## Suggested Setup



## Setup Elements

- Tent, if the event is not held indoors
- 6 stage pieces (16' x 12')
- Stage skirting
- Stage backdrop
- Podium
- 1 AV table with cover
- 2 refreshment tables with covers
- 2 trash containers
- 50-plus chairs: 5 rows of 10 chairs plus extras
- Access to power for the AV technician
- Orange cone display
- Work vest display
- Work zone device displays
- Vendor displays
- Promotional giveaway displays
- VIP and speaker parking and seating

## STEP THREE: EVENT SUPPORT

**AV Technician:** If one is available, utilize the department of transportation's communications, video and photography department to coordinate audio visual needs for the event. If this is not an option, considering hiring a local AV technician for the event. His or her role is as follows:

- Provide speaker setup, which includes a corded microphone and stand. It is always a good idea to ask for a backup cordless microphone.
- The technician should arrive for setup one hour prior to the event start time.
- Equipment should be tested prior to the event.

*Note: If an AV technician is not hired but equipment is rented, be sure to test the sound system prior to the event. If there is a media partner for the event, such as a radio station, ask its staff to supply an emcee as well as a sound system.*

**Emcee:** As noted above, if there is a media partner for the event, ask it to supply an emcee. If not, have the DOT's communications team designate an emcee. This person will provide opening comments, introduce each speaker and make closing comments to conclude the event.

**Photographer:** Hire a photographer or designate someone to take photos. The photographer should arrive one hour prior to the event start time. Below is a suggested shot list, which should be emailed to the photographer prior to the event. The list includes items to be used for social media and to document the setup for future reference.

- Event setup
- DJ setup
- Refreshments setup
- Crowd shots
- Candid photos
- Group photos at the Photo Op Spot (see below)
- Event presentation photos

*Note: Ask the photographer to release all photos to you the day of the event. That enables you to post photos on social media in a timely manner.*

## STEP FOUR: MAKE THE EVENT SPECIAL

**Memorialize lives lost:** Create a display that recognizes people who lost their lives in work zones. Two ideas are placing black ribbons on orange traffic cones or placing wooden crosses in the ground and putting worker vests and hard hats on them.

**Guest Speakers:** It is recommended that each guest speaker be given five minutes to speak. Efforts to book guest speakers usually begin three months prior to the event. A typical presentation runs as follows:

11 a.m.	Opening Remarks
11:03 a.m.	Guest Speaker
11:10 a.m.	Guest Speaker
11:17 a.m.	Guest Speaker
11:24 a.m.	Closing Remarks

Opening remarks:

- Thank guests for coming
- Recognize dignitaries in the audience
- Give brief history of NWZAW
- Provide an overview of the daily events for the entire week

Guest Speaker Options: The governor, state legislators, the mayor or another local elected official, family member(s) of a work zone incident victim, the head of the local DOT, a first responder or someone else who will appreciate the importance of work zone safety.

If the governor or another high-ranking official attends, be prepared to meet with the person’s security detail prior to the event. This person will want to assess safety considerations and issues such as entry and exit points and restrooms.

Closing remarks:

- Thank guest speakers
- Thank guests for coming
- Remind them about the daily events

*Please see pages 12-13 for Opening and Closing Remarks examples.*

**Refreshments:** Seek sponsors for refreshments such as through the local ATSSA chapter. Keep this simple by selecting refreshments that don’t require preparation on scene and can be placed out for self-service. Items should be packaged individually for food safety considerations. Items to consider:

- Bottled water
- Cookies
- Cupcakes
- Mini muffins
- Sub sandwiches
- Potato chips
- Napkins, cups, plates, cutlery for serving

Grocery stores and wholesale clubs typically have food trays, which provide a cost-effective option for refreshments.

**Goodie Bags:** Goodie bags are optional, but a nice touch. Another option is to have a table with “takeaway” items. Always make ten more bags than you expect to need. Goodie bags might include:





- Promotional items for your business such as pens, notepads
- Orange awareness ribbon
- Fun orange snacks such as orange Tic Tacs, mini Goldfish cracker packs, Reese's peanut butter cups, orange Starbursts, etc.
- Travel size hand sanitizer with an orange traffic cone sticker
- Reminder flyer about Go Orange Day. The flyer should include:
  - Go Orange Day date
  - How to participate
  - Information on where to post photos and hashtags to use



*Note: Be sure to bring extra flyers and extra ribbons.*

**Photo Opportunity Spot:** The purpose of the Photo Op Spot is to bring some fun to the event. It is a great location for the photographer to take group photos. These photos can then be put in an album on your Facebook page. Let guests know where they can access the photos. They can then share the image on their page, which is a great way to engage on social media.



*Example:* Have the photographer set up a photo booth with a white backdrop. Bring an orange carpet and work zone props for the photo booth. You may even want to purchase a customized backdrop with #NWZAW and #Orange4Safety on it.

*Note: When creating the Facebook album, be sure to advertise Go Orange Day so people can participate.*

## STEP FIVE: WHO TO INVITE

NWZAW events typically include invitations to local media, elected officials, law enforcement, public safety officials, school officials, school board representatives, contractors, local industry suppliers and the local Chamber of Commerce.

Three months prior to the kickoff event, begin compiling a database of potential invitees. During this process, confirm the spelling of all names, any titles associated with the guest, and the mailing or email address for each individual. It is important to send invitations to the media even though you will send a press release later. Invitations should require guests to RSVP to get a head count for goodie bags and refreshments.

- Invitations should be sent three weeks prior to the event. High-ranking officials should be sent a formal letter. Others could be sent an email calendar appointment request or an email invitation.
- One week prior to the event, send an email reminder about the event.

*Please see page 14 for an invitation example.*

## STEP SIX: ADVERTISE

Work with your department's operations center, if appropriate, to have the national theme for NWZAW placed on digital message signs (DMS) throughout the state. Also, work with billboard advertising companies to place the national poster on digital and standard billboards statewide.

## STEP SEVEN: THE MEDIA

Three months prior to the kickoff event, begin compiling a database of local media contacts. For all news outlets, determine the correct contact(s) within the news department and confirm the spelling of names, correct title and each person's email address. Do not presume the online media contacts list is up-to-date. Call to confirm to be sure press releases will get to the proper people.

- Send a press release with details on the event one month in advance.
- One week prior to the event, email the press release again.

## STEP EIGHT: CREATE A "GAME DAY" GUIDE & PLANNING CALENDAR

A Game Day Guide serves as a tool for staying organized and keeping track of who is responsible for each task the day before and the day of the event. Below you will also find a planning calendar recommendation.

### NWZAW NATIONAL KICKOFF SETUP & GAME DAY GUIDE

Contacts	Phone Number
Photographer:	
AV Technician:	
Facility Contact:	

### Monday, April 17 – SETUP DAY

Hours should be determined by staffing. An 8-hour shift should be set aside for setup to allow time to address any problems that arise.

Time	Description	Assigned To
8 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Set up tents, tables, chairs, work zone device displays, vendor displays, banners, stage, podium, generators, portable potties, etc.	
	Confirm the location for memorial displays, which should be placed the morning of the event so as not to be disturbed while unattended.	
	Test the sound system	

## Tuesday, April 18 – GAME DAY

<b>Time</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>
8 a.m.	Final Setup Set up memorial displays.	Facility
9 a.m.	Support staff arrives to ensure setup is correct and is on-site to troubleshoot. They also bring goodie bags, Go Orange Day flyers and extra ribbons.	
10 a.m.	Goodie bags are put on chairs	
10 a.m.	AV Technician arrives	Checks in with NAME
10 a.m.	Photographer arrives	Checks in with NAME. Shot list is reviewed.
10 a.m.	Refreshments arrive	Setup done by NAME.
10:30 a.m.	Guests start arriving	
10:30 a.m.	Photographer begins shooting.	
11 a.m.	Presentation begins. Opening remarks	
11:03 a.m.	Guest Speaker #1	
11:10 a.m.	Guest Speaker #2	
11:20 a.m.	Guest Speaker #3	
11:27 a.m.	Closing remarks	
12 p.m.	Clean up after guests leave	

Although this is generally an industry event, be prepared for members of the general public to attend the event.

- Encourage them to participate.
- Give them a ribbon.
- Give them a flyer about the daily events.
- Offer them the opportunity to participate in the Photo Op at the designated spot.

### Planning Calendar

You may wish to create a calendar or Excel spreadsheet to track the steps to be taken. It could run from three months out through the event date.

## OPENING AND CLOSING REMARKS EXAMPLES

About 3 minutes	Opening Remarks
15 minutes total	Guest Speakers
Less than 2 minutes	Closing Remarks

### Opening Remarks

Good morning, and welcome to the National Work Zone Awareness Week kickoff event. My name is [INSERT NAME] I'm the [INSERT TITLE] for [INSERT ORGANIZATION]. I'd like to take a moment to recognize some special guests, [INSERT NAMES]. Thank you to everyone for attending today. Guest speakers and team members will be available for questions after the presentation.

National Work Zone Awareness Week is held each spring to raise awareness as roadway work gets into full swing. The goal is to remind everyone of the importance of paying attention as they approach and drive through work zones so that both motorists and roadway workers remain safe. Drivers are urged to take note of reduced speed limits, eliminate distractions and be watchful for roadway workers and their equipment. This year's National Work Zone Awareness Week theme is "You play a role in work zone safety. Work with us."

Go Orange Day takes place tomorrow. Join us as we wear orange to show our support for the men and women who work tirelessly to keep our roads in top condition. Take a photo of yourself wearing orange and show your commitment to work zone safety by posting it to Facebook and Twitter with the hashtags #Orange4Safety and #GoOrangeDay. And on Friday, pause for a moment of silence in honor of those who have lost their lives in roadway work zone incidents.

In 2020, the most recent year for which statistics were available, there were 774 fatal crashes in work zones resulting in 857 deaths. In addition, 117 roadway workers were killed in work zones in 2020, according to the [National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse](#). The remainder – and vast majority of those killed -- were motorists, passengers and pedestrians.

Additionally, there were an estimated 102,000 work zone crashes in 2020, resulting in an estimated 44,000 injuries , according to the Clearinghouse.

National Work Zone Awareness Week grew out of an idea that started at Virginia's Department of Transportation in 1997. Two years later, the American Traffic Safety Services Association, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and the Federal Highway Administration partnered to establish the national public awareness campaign, which has expanded to include the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Virginia Department of Transportation, Maryland State Highway Administration, D.C. Department of Transportation, Associated General Contractors, and American Road & Transportation Builders. The event also receives support from individuals and organizations impacted by work zone safety.

*Note: At this point in the introduction, you could take a moment to talk about your mission statement and how your business supports NWZAW.*

### **Guest Speakers**

The suggested time for each guest speaker is five minutes. Each person should be briefed on the topic for his or her remarks. It is helpful to provide ideas and statistics.

(Sources include the Federal Highway Administration, [nwzaw.org](http://nwzaw.org) and [workzonesafety.org](http://workzonesafety.org).) Asking for a copy of each speaker's comments ahead of the event ensures the information is accurate and the timing is appropriate.

### **Closing Remarks**

Closing remarks generally take less than two minutes. Below is a sample.

Thank you to our guest speakers for their thoughtful remarks. We appreciate everyone's commitment to work zone safety. Our goal is to educate the community about National Work Zone Awareness Week and get everyone's participation in keeping work zones safe. Don't forget to wear orange tomorrow for Go Orange Day! Thank you all for attending our kickoff event.

**Sample Invitation:**

# National Work Zone Awareness Week

[DATE]

Dear [NAME],

We are pleased to invite you to the National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW) kickoff event on April 18 at [LOCATION] from [TIME]. Join us as we work to bring awareness to the importance of work zone safety. The kickoff event will feature guest speakers and refreshments will be provided.

NWZAW was created to raise public awareness of work zone hazards and the importance of work zone safety. Motorists are encouraged to slow to posted speed limits, eliminate distractions while driving and be watchful for roadway workers and their equipment. This year's theme is "Work zones are a sign to slow down."

Let's unite for safety by wearing Orange on April 19 for Go Orange Day. Take a picture of yourself wearing orange and post it to Facebook and Twitter with the hashtags #Orange4Safety and #GoOrangeDay.

You're also invited to join us on Moment of Silence Day on April 21 to remember the people whose lives were lost in a work zone incident.

Thank you for showing your support for the men and women who work tirelessly to keep our roadways safe. We look forward to seeing you on April 18.

Please RSVP to [NAME] at [NUMBER] or [EMAIL] by [DATE].

Best regards,  
[NAME]

[FIRST & LAST NAME], [TITLE]

# GO ORANGE DAY

Go Orange Day takes place on Wednesday, April 19 and is an important part of NWZAW. This day allows the community to show its support for roadway safety in work zones by wearing orange. Participants are encouraged to post videos and photos of themselves or a group wearing orange with the hashtags #Orange4Safety and #GoOrangeDay. Videos and photos should be fun, safe and creative.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The idea behind community outreach is to increase awareness about NWZAW, specifically Go Orange Day.

Think outside the box by looking for opportunities to form partnerships with local companies or organizations to join in Go Orange Day. Consider opportunities in lieu of traditional advertising. Remember to support the community partners through social media posts and, if available, logo placement on your website.

## IDEA ONE: GET GROUPS OF PEOPLE INVOLVED

- Design a T-shirt using this year's slogan and the NWZAW poster artwork available for free download ([nwzaw.org](http://nwzaw.org)). Distribute them to your team to wear to raise awareness of the importance of work zone safety. Make arrangements to offer it to the public for purchase from your website or an event location.
- Brainstorm about which groups you can empower to be ambassadors for Go Orange Day. Some groups to consider include:
  - High schools
  - Hospitals
  - Package delivery companies
  - Moving companies
  - Food/drink distributors
  - Local media
  - Local trucking companies
  - Local road safety companies
  - Area police & fire departments
  - The local DOT
- When empowering ambassadors for Go Orange Day, it is important to try to meet face-to-face. If that's not possible, send an email encouraging participation. These meetings should start three months prior to the event.
- Explain Go Orange Day and how the group's participation is important. High schools, for example, could link it to driver education to drive home the message of new drivers being alert to the special attention needed at work zones.
- Create a flyer to distribute to community partners to assist them in planning and generating ideas.
- Encourage pictures, videos and social posts. Make sure partners know which hashtags to use – #Orange4Safety #GoOrangeDay.
- Get the direct phone number and email for each community partner. Use it to

reach out one month prior to the event as a reminder. This also provides an opportunity to ask what kind of support they need from you to participate.

- Reach out again by phone or email one week prior to Go Orange Day.

## **IDEA TWO: WEAR IT. GET IT**

Partner with locally owned restaurants, eateries and coffee shops to create a “Wear It. Get It” program. Start communicating with businesses three months in advance of the event date. The best way to approach this program is to keep it simple.

*Partnership Examples (this can double as your social media posts and event copy)*

Be one of the first 50 people to stop by Luke’s Donuts on Wednesday, April 19 between X and Y wearing orange for National Work Zone Awareness Week. Check in with a picture showing you in your orange gear. Show the business you posted it with the #Orange4Safety hashtag and get a FREE donut!

*Restrictions are a must!*

- By limiting it to 50 people during a specific timeframe, the business can maintain control over the promotion.
  - The business partners can prep for the product giveaway.
- The partners pick the time of day for the promotion. This needs to be a beneficial partnership and not negatively impact normal business operations.
- Five business partners is the maximum recommended.

*This is a win-win for all parties involved.*

- Partners can promote it on their social media sites prior to the event date.
- Participants use the hashtag and check in at the store, providing great social media publicity for everyone involved.
- The more pictures posted, the greater the awareness about NWZAW.
- Include these posts on your social media planner. (See NWZAW Event Promotion Guide.)

*Note: It is generally easier to work with locally owned businesses because they can make fast executive decisions. They are often more engaged in community initiatives.*

## **IDEA THREE: GROCERY STORE DISPLAY**

Local grocery stores are a great way to reach the community. The general manager can typically make an executive decision without having to go through the corporate office. If possible, three to five grocery stores is usually a good number for partnering.

- Approach the manager about doing a “tower of orange products” display. The tower can be wrapped with caution tape to make it more interesting.
- Supply the stores with a poster about Go Orange Day to display with the tower.
- Ideally, the tower should be on display two weeks prior to the event.
- Supply the store staff with orange awareness ribbons.



## **MOMENT OF SILENCE DAY**

Moment of Silence Day is Friday, April 21. This event is to remember the people whose lives were lost in a work zone incident.

## **WORK ZONE SAFETY TRAINING DAY**

Work Zone Safety Training Day is Monday, April 17. On this day, employers and workers are encouraged to pause during the workday for safety demonstrations, training in hazard recognition and fall prevention, and talks about hazards, protective methods, and the company's safety policies, goals and expectations.

Resources to conduct a Work Zone Safety Training Day are available from the [Center for Construction Research and Training](#).

## **EVENT MATERIALS AVAILABLE ONLINE**

Official Website: [NWZAW.org](http://NWZAW.org)

- Official NWZAW Poster
- Event accessories and order form
- Invitation example (see page 14)
- Press release example (see NWZAW Event Promotion Guide)
- Previous campaigns
- Social media links
- NWZAW history

Host: Missouri DOT, [modot.org](http://modot.org)

Federal Highway Administration: [ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/outreach/wz\\_awareness.htm](http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/outreach/wz_awareness.htm)