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Texas' Move Over/Slow Down law expands Sept. 1.

Right now, the law requires drivers in Texas to yield to police, fire and emergency vehicles. Starting Sept. 1, the Move Over/Slow Down law expands to provide that same protection for Texas Department of Transportation workers. Drivers must move over or slow down when approaching TxDOT workers and vehicles that are stopped with overhead flashing blue or amber lights.

The new addition to the Move Over law requires motorists to move out of the lane closest to the TxDOT vehicle when possible or reduce their speed to 20 miles per hour below the posted limit. If the road does not offer multiple lanes, the driver must slow down. On roadways with posted speed limits of 25 miles per hour or less, drivers must reduce their speed to 5 miles per hour. Violators can be fined up to \$2,000.

Austin Bridge & Road, the contractor on the Texas Department of Transportation's Hwy. 174 median improvement project, is setting up lane closures on Hwy. 174 for the next several months as the median work gets underway. The project is expected to be complete in 2014. Workers from the City's public works department are also at risk as they work to repair and replace streets, water lines and signs.

"Highway incidents are consistently the most frequent type of workplace fatality in Texas," Burleson's Director of Public Works Aaron Russell said. "While we fully support the expansion of the Move Over/Slow Down law to protect Texas Department of Transportation employees, we ask that the traveling public recognize the danger associated with roadway maintenance on every public roadway and take appropriate caution to protect themselves and the public servants who are performing roadway maintenance."

Phil Wilson, TxDOT's executive director, said that more than 100 TxDOT employees working in construction areas have been struck and killed by motorists since 1938. The Burleson Police Department's only in the line of duty death came at a crash site. On Dec. 26, 1987, Officer Janice Vanderveer was placing flares to divert traffic from an accident involving an 18-wheeler when she was hit by a passing car. She died the following day, on her 36th birthday.