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Campaign Reminds Drivers that Road Workers are “Sitting Ducks”
*Work zone safety videos feature Minnesota Duck Ben Afquack
as drivers take to roads and put workers at risk.*

St. Paul, Minn. (May 7, 2020) – As the state’s economy begins to open up, more Minnesotans are getting back behind the wheel and that means the state’s road workers are once again “sitting ducks.” To remind drivers to slow down and keep workers safe, the Minnesota Safety Council has enlisted Ben Afquack, Minnesota’s top duck and Instagram star.

“Speeding and distracted drivers put the lives of highway construction and other road workers at risk every day,” says Lisa Kons, traffic safety programs manager, Minnesota Safety Council. “This is a serious safety issue and we need to grab Minnesotans’ attention.”

Ben Afquack – known as the “Minnesota Duck” to his 72,000 Instagram followers and in mainstream media coverage – and his human, Derek Johnson, volunteered to appear in the series of “sitting duck” public service videos, photos and social media posts to remind drivers to slow down and pay attention.

The [public service announcements](#) are a collaboration of the Minnesota Safety Council, Minnesota Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, Washington County Toward Zero Deaths and Citizens for Safe Work Zones.

Kons noted that road workers, considered essential during the stay-at-home order, found themselves at even greater risk despite a significant traffic decline as drivers’ speeds increased significantly.

“When you’re driving and see orange cones and work zone signs, remember the lives at risk,” says Kons. “Slow down, get off the phone and focus on safe driving for yourself, and for those who work on and around our roads.”

MnDOT reports that more than 188 active work zones are scheduled throughout Minnesota for the 2020 construction season. In addition, utility crews and others are regularly working

alongside Minnesota thoroughfares. A work zone is defined as any area where highway construction, maintenance or utility work is being done. Work zones are identified by warning signs, signals, barriers, pavement markings and flaggers.

Preliminary data show in 2019, seven people were killed and 810 were injured in Minnesota work zone incidents. Each year in the U.S., a work zone crash occurs once every 5.4 minutes, according to the Federal Highway Administration. Every day, 70 work zone crashes occur that result in at least one injury. Every week, 12 work zone crashes occur that result in at least one fatality.

The Minnesota Safety Council is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preventing injuries on the road, at work, at home, and in the community. For more information, see www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org.

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