

MEMBER UPDATE



ALL AUPE MEMBERS

Traffic Safety Amendment Act: What you need to know

Whether as roadside workers or drivers,
AUPE members need to know about changes

In March 2022, the Transportation Minister Rajan Sawhney announced a series of important changes to the Traffic Safety Act which will make roadside workers safer.

From road maintenance workers at EMCON to sheriffs and beyond, AUPE members are on Alberta's roads making them safe for Albertans. It's a dangerous job, but we do it.

That's why we're happy to see changes in the law to strengthen protections for roadside workers. Under the previous version of the legislation, when a maintenance vehicle is stopped in the emergency lane, all vehicles passing in the nearest lane were required to slow down to 60 kilometers per hour. Under the new rules, all vehicles passing the site (even if they are in the far lane) must slow to 60 — or the speed limit, whichever is lower. On a bi-directional road, the lower speed requirements apply to drivers in both directions, while on a separated highway, it applies only to drivers on the side where the work vehicle is stopped.

Cars are heavy machinery, and speeding cars are extremely dangerous. Every year, roadside workers are seriously injured in unnecessary crashes due to careless drivers going at high speed. In cities, on highways, and on back-country roads, speed kills. We encourage Albertans to slow down, particularly when passing a stopped emergency or road maintenance vehicle.

We welcome these changes, which come into effect in the spring of 2023. In the meantime, even when the law is not yet in effect, we encourage Albertans to slow down when passing roadside workers, no matter what lane you are driving in.

We will be watching carefully as the government implements these changes to ensure that they contain adequate enforcement mechanisms. Keeping roadside workers safe means more than well-intentioned legislation — it also requires us to ensure that the rules are respected.

As we approach peak summer, Albertans are traveling around this province to take advantage of the season. When you see workers pulled over on the side of the road, slow down. Slowing down costs you a few seconds — failing to slow down can cost a worker their life.