

Near miss in Bangor construction zone leads police to issue 25 tickets = \$10,000 in fines

By [Nok-Noi Ricker](#), BDN Staff

BANGOR, Maine — After a construction worker moving a barrel last Wednesday in a [construction zone on Interstate 95](#) had to jump behind a concrete barrier to avoid being hit by a speeding driver, Trooper Trevor Snow of the Maine State Police decided to set up a speed trap. The speed trap was conducted on Thursday, July 24. In two hours the troopers wrote 25 tickets that generated more than \$10,000 in fines, state police Sgt. Scott Hamilton said Tuesday. “They set up a detail with five troopers, and they just focused on speeding vehicles and distracted drivers in the construction zone,” Hamilton said.

The fines in construction zones are doubled, due to safety concerns for people working within the zones. Snow decided to organize the speed trap after the near miss involving Norman Boulier III, 44, a local man whose hometown was not provided, who was charged by Snow with imprudent speed and failure to obey a traffic control device. “He admitted going 62 [mph] in the construction zone,” Hamilton said.

The speed limit in Bangor on I-95 is 60 mph but is lowered to 45 mph in the construction zone, Hamilton said.

Boulier entered the construction zone near the Union Street bridge construction area going too fast and approached some construction workers moving barrels, according to Hamilton. He almost struck one worker after failing to move into the travel lane.

The worker dropped the barrel he was moving and fled to the safety by jumping over the concrete median barrier, Hamilton said.

“The car hit the barrel,” the sergeant said. “There were no injuries.”

Drivers traveling through construction zones where people are working should take extra precautions to ensure safety, Hamilton said.

“To be safe, people should slow down,” he said.

The [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported](#) that 442 workers died after being struck by a vehicle or mobile equipment in road construction sites nationwide between 2003 and 2010. Of those deaths, 153 involved non-construction vehicles such as cars, buses, tractor-trailers and motorcycles.

There have been 10 construction zone deaths on state-owned roadways between 2009 and 2013, according to Maine Department of Transportation spokesman Ted Talbot. He said none of those deaths were DOT workers.

There were a total of 2,562 vehicle crashes in work zones with 301 involving serious injuries for the same five years, Talbot said.

The laser speed enforcement detail within the Bangor construction zone will be repeated half a dozen more times in the coming months.

“Due to the obvious safety factor, Troop E will be converting what we have left for highway safety speed enforcement grant funds and dedicate them to this problem,” the [Maine State Police website states](#). “That will allow for 6 enforcement details over the months of August and September.”

While most of the highway paving is nearing completion, construction on the [Union Street bridge and the on- and off-ramps is expected to last for the next two years](#), said Steve Theborge, regional 4 manager for the Maine Department of Transportation.

“There seems to be an issue every summer and even in the wintertime when we’re plowing — people just don’t slow down,” Theborge said. “That is a big issue. We want people to be safe.”

The reduced speeds are in place to save lives and prevent injuries.

“The reason the limits are the way they are is for the safety of the workers and the drivers,” Theborge said, “We want them to get to their destinations.”

DOT employees and subcontractors doing the construction are required to follow many safety guidelines when working in roadway construction zones, he said.

“The one guideline we ask the public to follow is to slow down,” Theborge said. “It’s critical.”