



Work zone signs traveling eastbound heading toward the incident site which is just beyond the curve on the highway.



The vehicle involved in the incident looking west along the shoulder of the eastbound lane.



Flagger Fatally Injured When Struck by a Car at a Highway Work Zone

Washington State Case Report

Through the OSHA and Roadway Work Zone Safety and Health Partners Alliance, the Alliance participants developed this case study for informational purposes only. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor January 2011.

On February 22, 2000 in Washington State, a 42-year-old maintenance technician, who was performing the duties of a traffic control flagger, died when he was struck by a car at a highway work zone.

What Happened?

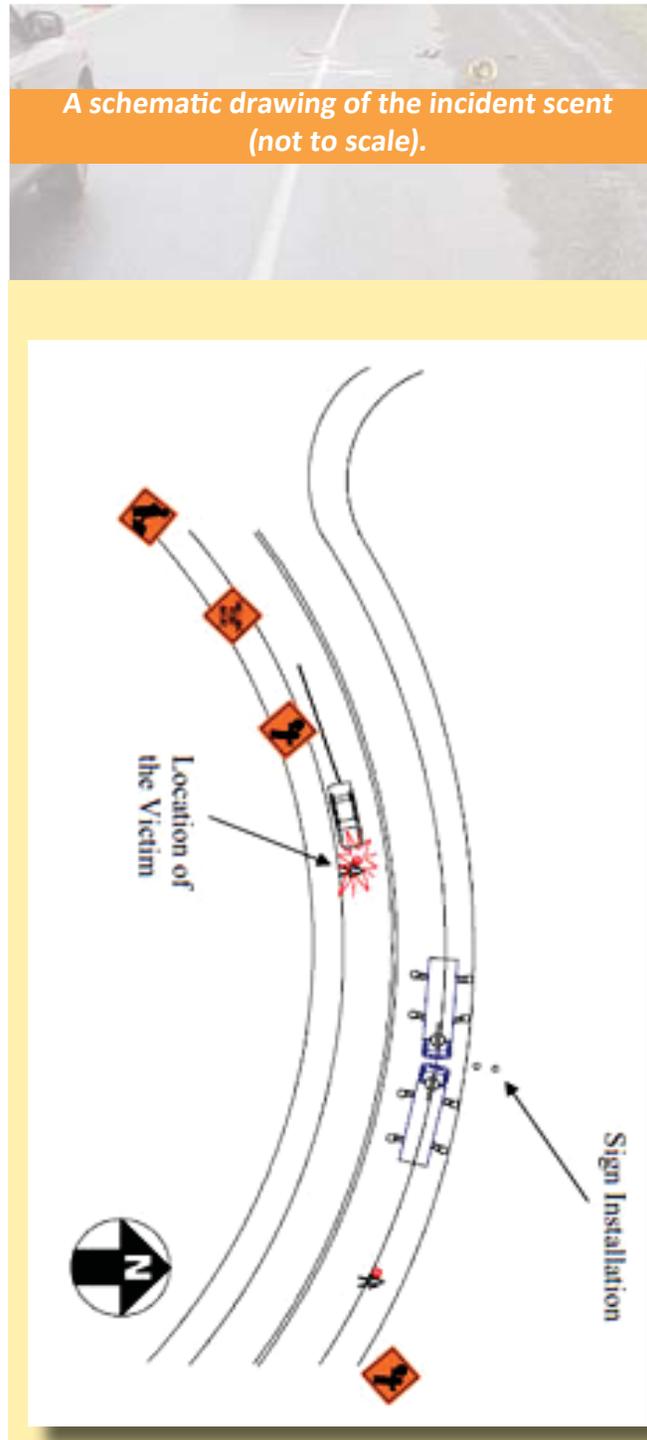
The flagger (the fatal victim), was working with a state maintenance team to install a new roadside information sign along a major two-lane state highway.

The employer trained and certify their own flaggers. The driver of a small passenger vehicle may have been distracted, or was confused as she entered the work zone. The driver was not able to comprehend the flagger's instructions and drove her vehicle straight at the victim.

The vehicle struck the victim traveling at a reported speed of between 50 - 60 MPH. On impact, the victim struck the hood and windshield of the car, and then was thrown over the top of the vehicle before hitting the asphalt pavement along the highway. A witness who saw the incident immediately called 911 for emergency assistance.

Who Got Hurt?

Emergency personnel treated the victim on site. He died from his injuries during transport to a local medical facility.



What Can Be Done to Avoid Similar Fatalities?

Management:

- Use an alternative project plan and design options to perform road and highway work so flaggers are not used for traffic control.
- Employers should identify appropriate escape routes for flaggers and other workers in the event that a vehicle does not follow intended traffic controls.
- Employers should use positive protective barriers to shield workers from intruding vehicles.
- Employers should regularly train and supervise all workers regarding specific hazards associated with work zones.
- Ensure that flaggers have proper certification.

Workers:

- Do not operate as a traffic control flagger without proper certification.
- Workers should be wearing high-visibility garments when working in and around work zones (class 2 minimum).

