

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106216](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

First responders, highway construction workers, and others risk being killed or injured when working on the side of the road. Reducing transportation-related fatalities and injuries is one of DOT's top priorities. NHTSA plays a key role in working toward that priority, including by supporting states' efforts to promote their Move Over laws.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act includes a provision for GAO to review issues related to states' Move Over laws. This report (1) identifies the key characteristics of states' Move Over laws, (2) describes how states have promoted these laws, and (3) assesses the extent to which DOT has supported states' efforts to promote these laws.

GAO reviewed Move Over laws and certain related legal provisions for all states, as well as online information about states' promotion efforts. GAO compared DOT's public awareness materials related to Move Over laws with DOT strategic plans and federal internal control standards. GAO also interviewed officials in seven states selected for specific characteristics of their Move Over laws, as well as DOT officials and stakeholders from law enforcement, trash and recycling, and other associations.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that NHTSA update its public awareness materials on states' Move Over laws to more fully reflect the range of vehicles covered by these laws, such as highway construction, utility, and disabled vehicles. DOT agreed with the recommendation.

View [GAO-24-106216](#). For more information, contact Elizabeth Repko at (202) 512-2834 or [repkoe@gao.gov](mailto:repkoe@gao.gov).

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## ROADSIDE SAFETY

### DOT Should Update Public Awareness Materials on Move Over Laws

#### What GAO Found

All states and the District of Columbia (states) have "Move Over or Slow Down" (Move Over) laws, which generally require drivers to change lanes, slow down, or both when approaching certain vehicles stopped on the roadside with their warning lights activated. These laws can protect vulnerable roadside workers. Move Over law requirements vary, such as in the specific actions required of drivers, potential penalties for a violation, and types of vehicles covered. All states have laws covering first responder vehicles, such as police cars, fire trucks, and ambulances. Move Over laws in all states also cover certain other types of vehicles, which may include highway construction, utility, trash, or disabled vehicles. There is no federal Move Over law.

States have promoted their Move Over laws in various ways, including through road signs and social media; targeted law enforcement; and annual public awareness events. When planning these efforts, states consider factors such as available resources and staff expertise.

#### Example of Move Over or Slow Down Road Sign



Source: New Mexico Department of Transportation. | [GAO-24-106216](#)

Within the Department of Transportation (DOT), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) supports states' efforts to promote Move Over laws through funding, research, and public awareness materials (e.g., sample social media posts, press releases, graphics, banners, and videos). However, NHTSA's public awareness materials generally focus on first responders and do not fully reflect states' Move Over laws, all of which now cover a wider range of vehicles. Officials GAO interviewed from two of the seven selected states said they use NHTSA's materials. State officials also described having limited resources and expertise to develop such materials themselves. Updating NHTSA's materials to more fully reflect the types of vehicles covered by states' laws, such as highway construction, utility, trash, and disabled vehicles, would enable NHTSA to help states better promote their Move Over laws and could ultimately improve safety for all motorists on the side of the road.