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Light traffic during COVID-19 lets Arizona road workers extend project hours

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Posted Apr 10, 2020

PHOENIX (3TV/CBS 5) -- Due to more people needing to stay home to avoid the spread of COVID-19, traffic congestion in Arizona has significantly decreased. As a result, will road crews take advantage of the situation? Arizona's Family discussed this rare opportunity with the Arizona Department of Transportation on Friday.

ADOT representative Tom Hermann says the department believes that the stay-at-home order can be a positive impact on the amount of time it takes to get work done. "We do think this is an opportunity to get things done safer and without additional delays to drivers," he said.

Traffic during the pandemic has reportedly been cut by more than a third on Arizona freeways, giving ADOT the chance to finish projects faster. Traffic is so light in the early evening that working on projects with lane closures around that time won't cause major delays

"We usually close lanes from 10 p.m. on a Friday until 5 a.m. on Monday," said Randy Everett, the senior division administrator for ADOT's Central District, in a [released statement](#). "Now we're finding that when we put in closures at 8 p.m. or even 7:30, there's no line of traffic. We're able to get our work done without creating an inconvenience for drivers."

ADOT crews are already working various jobs across the state during the coronavirus pandemic. The department stresses that employees are still practicing social distancing while working.

Although this could be a golden opportunity to get more projects on the roster, ADOT probably won't take advantage of it. Department officials say they can't start new projects that haven't been planned, approved and funded.

While the traffic is down, speeding during rush hour has reportedly increased by 25%. In March, an ADOT worker was hit and killed while putting signs out in a work zone. It still weighs heavily on the department. "People need to be careful and keep the speed within the posted limit within the work zone," said Hermann.

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