



Arizona Department  
of Transportation

## US 60 Salt River Canyon-Show Low Roadway Departure Safety Project

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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#### **What will the safety project entail?**

Arizona Department of Transportation crews will remove vegetation that presents a hazard on US 60 between mileposts 301-340 including trees, shrubs, logs and upturned stumps. Vegetation will be removed on both sides of the roadway within 30 feet from the edge of the travel lane and five feet from the back of the guardrail, where guardrail exists.

The vegetation is being removed to re-establish a 30-foot roadway departure zone that will provide drivers with more open space to avoid a collision with a tree or reduce the severity of a collision if their vehicle leaves the roadway. The project is located mostly on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, with small portions in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (approximately 1.5 miles) and the city of Show Low (about 1 mile).

#### **When is the project scheduled to start and be completed?**

The project is expected to begin before the end of the year and take approximately two months to complete. The project schedule may be impacted by unforeseen circumstances, such as weather.

#### **Why is the safety project needed?**

In Arizona, about 60 percent of all roadway fatalities are the result of drivers leaving the road, referred to as “roadway departure crashes.” Trees are the single-most commonly struck objects in serious roadside crashes. Due to the high percentage of fatal and serious-injury crashes of this nature, Arizona is classified as a *Roadway Departure Focus State* by the Federal Highway Administration.

It is important that ADOT completes safety projects statewide, such as this one on US 60, to create or maintain “roadway departure zones” for drivers. A roadway departure zone, also referred to as a “clear zone,” is an unobstructed roadside area - adjacent to the roadway - that allows drivers to stop or regain control of their vehicles after leaving the roadway. The zones also improve driver visibility.

#### **Have there been crashes along this portion of the US 60?**

Yes - 587 crashes occurred on this section of US 60 over the 10-year period between 2011 and 2020, which is the most recent data available. This includes 11 fatal and 34 serious-injury crashes as well as many crashes involving vehicles leaving the roadway. Of the roadway departure crashes, there were 31 tree-related crashes, including three fatal and four serious injury crashes.

**Why do drivers leave the roadway?**

There are many reasons why drivers leave the roadway. A few examples are driver inattention, distraction and drowsiness, severe weather conditions and attempts to avoid other vehicles or wildlife on the road.

**Why does the safety project need to be done now?**

Due to the existing trees and other vegetation along this segment of US 60, the current 30-foot roadway recovery zone does not meet state or federal standards. As a result, ADOT needs to remove the vegetation to re-establish the clear zone within ADOT's right of way to enhance safety to motorists.

**What are the anticipated work hours and traffic restrictions while the safety project is underway?**

Construction activities will take place Mondays through Fridays during daylight hours. There will be no work on weekends or holidays. One lane of traffic will remain open on US 60 at all times, and existing turn lanes will also stay open. Barricades and other traffic-control devices will be removed after crews finish working each day.

**Have there been similar safety projects to re-establish or create roadway departure zones on other highways in Arizona?**

Yes - Similar projects to remove trees and other vegetation to create or re-establish roadway departure zones have been completed on several state highways, including State Route 260 (between Heber-Overgaard and Forest Lakes), State Route 87 (near Payson) and Interstate 19 (southern Arizona).

**How will the existing vegetation within the roadway departure zone be removed?**

The existing vegetation will be cleared using manual and mechanical methods, including hand saws, pruners/loppers and chainsaws. Wood chippers will be used to chip material that can be spread onsite.

**How is the safety project being paid for?**

Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program funds will pay for nearly 95 percent of the \$1.5 million project cost. The remaining costs will be paid by the state.

**What considerations were taken into account to protect wildlife and cultural resources in the project area?**

As with all projects involving federal funding, ADOT must comply with all pertinent federal guidelines to ensure there are no significant impacts to cultural and environmental resources in the project area. The White Mountain and San Carlos Apache tribes, U.S. Forest Service and other agencies were consulted as part of the federal clearance process. Environmental clearances were reviewed and granted for the project to ensure there are no endangered or nesting birds within the project area during the time of year the work will be performed.

### **What will be done with the trees that are removed**

Through a cooperative agreement between ADOT and the White Mountain Apache Tribe, trees removed from tribal land will be stored and distributed to tribal members in need of firewood for the winter. Trees removed within the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest and Show Low will be provided to the respective agencies for their use.

### **How can I stay informed about the project?**

The best way to stay informed is to sign up to receive traffic alerts by email while the project is underway. The alerts will notify you in advance of project-related roadway restrictions.

- To subscribe, visit [azdot.gov](http://azdot.gov) and click on the *"Subscribe for Updates"* tab in the upper right-hand corner of the home page.
- After entering your email address, you will see a list of *"Subscription Topics"* that you can subscribe to. Expand the Northeast District Projects box to view the list of projects and corridors and simply click on the *"US 60: Salt River Canyon-Show Low Roadway Departure Safety Project"* box. Then click the "submit" button and you are done. It's that quick and easy!

### **What if I have questions about the project?**

ADOT welcomes your questions and comments. Please contact us in any of the following ways:

- *ONLINE*: Submit a question or comment through the ADOT website. Visit [azdot.gov/Contact](http://azdot.gov/Contact) and then select *"Projects"* from the dropdown menu.
- *BY PHONE*: ADOT bilingual information line at 855.712.8530.
- *BY MAIL*: ADOT Community Relations, 1655 W. Jackson St. MD 126F, Phoenix, AZ 85007.