



New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF  
**TRANSPORTATION**

**Michelle Lujan Grisham**, Governor  
**Michael R. Sandoval**, *Cabinet Secretary*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Dec. 7, 2021

### **Work zone crash claims the life of NMDOT employee**

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Department of Transportation is grieving the death of a beloved employee. Mittie Runyan was killed in a work zone crash on US 285 on Monday, Dec. 6. She and her maintenance crew based in Artesia were placing reflectors on a newly resurfaced stretch of road when the crash occurred. Runyan was 58 years old. She was hired April 3, 2000.

“This painful loss will reverberate statewide,” said Transportation Secretary Mike Sandoval. “We are a close-knit group, and we all grieve when we lose one of our own. Our deepest condolences go out to Mittie’s family who graciously shared her with us for 21 years. We are so sorry for the pain they must be going through. Our thoughts and prayers are with them all.”

According to police reports, Runyan was driving an NMDOT truck with her safety lights flashing when her vehicle was struck from behind by a commercial vehicle. New Mexico’s Move Over Law states, when approaching emergency vehicles with flashing lights to change lanes or slow down. This allows for a degree of separation between moving vehicles and emergency responders or disabled motorists.

Emergency vehicles include highway patrol, police, sheriff, fire, coroner/medical examiner, ambulance, tow, transportation, utility, corrections, National Guard, and others that carry equipment to save lives at crash sites or incidents, such as those involving a hazardous substance.

The Move Over Law is enforced in all 50 states. Drivers who do not comply with the Move Over law in New Mexico could face a \$117 fine.

<https://codes.findlaw.com/nm/chapter-66-motor-vehicles/nm-st-sect-66-7-332.html>

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**NMDOT**  
*Mobility for everyone*

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