



July 24, 2020

TO: All driver education operators and instructors

RE: Zipper Merge campaign



The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is working to educate drivers on the proper way to merge in New Mexico. It is called a **Zipper Merge**. It is a more efficient way for traffic to move through construction zones.

Most drivers start to merge as soon as they see warning signs a lane is closing ahead. This is an “early merge” which can lead to dangerous lane switching, inconsistent driving speeds that cause crashes, long back-ups and angry drivers. Research shows these dangers decrease traffic flow and traffic moves more efficiently when motorists use both lanes until the merge point then take turns moving into the open lane. This is a **Zipper Merge**.

A **Zipper Merge** reduces the overall length of traffic backups by as much as 40 percent and creates a sense of fairness for drivers moving at the same rate of speed.

The NMDOT Traffic Safety Division (TSD) will be providing **Zipper Merge** materials to all driving schools and incorporating this program into all driver education courses. Please provide the materials to students and have all classes review the 1 minute video on the proper technique to merge in construction zones. Please provide an updated curriculum to TSD to include the **Zipper Merge** program in all classroom training.

As we present new and innovative concepts to our novice drivers, we hope to develop a safer and more courteous driver for a lifetime.

For more information go to [www.zippermergenm.com](http://www.zippermergenm.com) or [click here](#) for an instructional video on how to do the **Zipper Merge**.

The NMDOT Traffic Safety Division appreciates the continued efforts by all of the driver education schools and instructors to educate new drivers in New Mexico. We understand the challenges of providing training during this pandemic and ensuring the safety for the students and instructors. Thank you for helping reduce crashes on New Mexico roads by providing a quality driver education training.

Franklin Garcia, Modal Director

**Michelle Lujan Grisham**  
Governor

**Michael R. Sandoval**  
Cabinet Secretary

#### Commissioners

**Jennifer Sandoval**  
Commissioner, Vice-Chairman  
District 1

**Bruce Ellis**  
Commissioner  
District 2

**Hilma E. Chynoweth**  
Commissioner  
District 3

**Walter G. Adams**  
Commissioner, Chairman  
District 4

**Thomas C. Taylor**  
Commissioner  
District 5

**Charles Lundstrom**  
Commissioner, Secretary  
District 6

NMDOT