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# Zipper Merge Reduces Delay Up to 50 Percent

JULY 26TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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**Missouri** - With summer construction season in full swing, motorists are faced with having to merge into reduced lanes for construction work at various locations across the state. The safest merging is to think about two lanes merging into one. Not one lane merging into the other.

Most motorists start to merge as soon as they see warning signs and learn which lane ahead is closed. When the highway is not heavily congested and traffic is able to move at the speed limit, it is best to merge early into the open lane. However, in dense, slow moving traffic, the open lane fills quickly. When a driver in the closed lane can't move into the open lane in time, the closed lane ends forcing the vehicle to suddenly stop. The vehicle must now join traffic from a dead stop. This driving behavior can lead to lane switching, inconsistent driving speeds that cause crashes, long back-ups and road rage.

Research shows these dangers decrease and traffic moves more smoothly when motorists use both lanes until reaching the defined merge area and then alternate merging every other vehicle in "zipper" fashion into the open lane.

By using two full lanes of traffic until the merge, the speed difference is reduced between the two lanes. The length of backups is reduced 40-50 percent. When both lanes continue to move slowly, everyone is equally delayed, which reduces road rage.

### **Driving Tips for Merging:**

With light congestion and traffic moving at the speed, merge out of the closed lane as

early as possible.

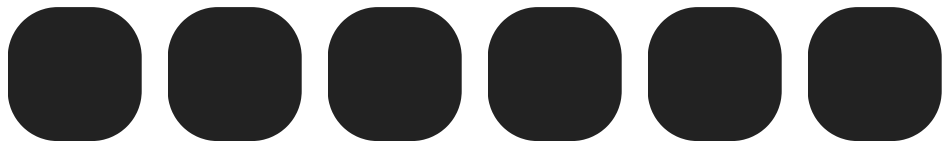
With heavy congestion and slowed or stopped traffic, use both lanes and merge at the lane closure.

Drivers fill both lanes and take turns merging every other car at the point of the lane closure.

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