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# BRIAN LEE

LAW FIRM, PLLC

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## Winter 2021



**Work zone crashes and fatalities have spiked in some states during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the drop in traffic, alarming transportation and highway safety officials.**

(STATELINE ARTICLE October 6, 2020 By: Jenni Bergal)

Workers patching potholes, striping roads, directing traffic or building highways are more at risk than ever, they say, as drivers zoom through work zones or are preoccupied chatting or texting on their phones.

Travel on all roads and streets dropped 40% in April and 26% in May, compared with last year, according to the Federal Highway Administration. But fatal crashes increased in some states. And while traffic volume has picked back up in recent months, work zone crews still are encountering speeders and more-distracted drivers.

“Speeding has really come to the forefront during COVID. People are going much too fast,” said Pam Shadel Fischer, a senior director at the Governors Highway Safety Association, which represents state

highway safety offices. “In work zones, that’s the worst thing we can have happen.”

It’s been particularly deadly in Michigan, where in just one week in September, vehicles struck three county employees and a state contractor in separate incidents, killing two.

“Last year, there were three worker fatalities, total. To have two fatalities and four hits within a week is very alarming,” said Courtney Bates, a Michigan Department of Transportation spokesperson. “It’s crazy.”

Work zones are particularly dangerous because of daily changes in traffic patterns, narrowed rights-of-way and other construction activities, according to the Federal Highway Administration. Crews work close to moving traffic — sometimes just a few feet away.

And during the pandemic, when traffic has been lighter, many transportation departments have stepped up maintenance, repairs and construction.

“If you’re patching a pothole or doing a pavement repair, the only thing between you and traffic coming at 80 miles an hour may be a traffic cone,” said Becky Allmeroth, chief safety and operations officer for the Missouri Department of Transportation. “If you have one driver distracted by their cellphone, it’s fatal.”

### Speeding Dangers

*Highway safety officials in many states have seen an increase in motorists caught speeding more than 100 mph in recent months. In work zones, they say, it’s even more alarming.*

# BRIAN LEE LAW FIRM, PLLC

P.O. Box 4580

Saratoga Springs, NY 12866



Brian & Louis

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## SKILLET COOKIE CAKE

Here's what you will need:

2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 cup light brown sugar, packed  
1 large egg  
1 large egg yolk  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
1/2 cup milk chocolate M&Ms\*  
1/2 cup peanut butter chips\*  
1/2 cup peanut butter-filled chocolate chips\*  
Ice cream (optional, but highly recommended)



\*You can use whatever chips, nuts, etc. that you like. I recommend about 1 1/2 cups total. I also sprinkled a few on top of the cookie before baking so I could easily tell what was inside the cookie.

Begin by placing an oven rack in the upper third of the oven. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Grease and flour a 10-inch ovenproof skillet. Then, in a medium-size bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt.

In the bowl of an electric mixer using the paddle attachment, cream together the butter and sugars on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 3-4 minutes. Reduce the speed to low; then add the egg, followed by the egg yolk and vanilla. Beat well. Add the flour mixture and beat on low until just combined.

Using a spatula, fold in the chocolate chips until just combined. Add the batter to the prepared pan and smooth out the top. Add a few more of your chips to the top of the batter, if desired.

Bake until the cookie is lightly browned on the outside, but still slightly under-cooked in the center. This will take about 20-22 minutes. Allow the cookie to cool for 10-15 minutes before serving.

Slice up and serve with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.  
(courtesy of [Inspired By Charm.com](http://InspiredByCharm.com))

## Giving Back

**Brian Lee Law Firm** has donated **125 gift cards**, each in the amount of **\$25**, to the **Emergency Food Pantry** in Malta to hand out to our neighbors in need. The cards are redeemable at the **Just Meats Deli and Market** stores located in Ballston Spa, Schuylerville, and Greenwich

The Emergency Food Pantry is located at the Community Center, 1 Bayberry Dr., Malta, and they are generally open 8:30 – 5:00.

