



Minnesota Department of Transportation

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MnDOT joins forces with national effort for work zone safety

Motorists asked to slow down, pay attention in work zones

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Transportation will observe National Work Zone Awareness Week April 11-15, in cooperation with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the Federal Highway Administration and the American Traffic Safety Services Foundation. Theme for the week is “Don’t Be That Driver!” reinforcing the message that motorists should be constantly alert and prepared for unexpected changes in and around work zones.

The week is an annual spring campaign held at the start of construction season to encourage safe driving through work zones. In Minnesota, MnDOT will officially kick off the construction season April 14, although many construction projects are already underway.

About 200 active work zones are scheduled throughout the state this construction season. A work zone is defined as an area where highway construction, maintenance or utility work is being done. Work zones are identified by warning signs, signals, barriers, pavement markings and flaggers.

Last year, 10 fatalities and 1,684 crashes happened in Minnesota work zones.

“All of the fatalities were motorists and their passengers, although in previous years there have been maintenance crew workers who have lost their lives, been injured or had close calls,” said Jay Hietpas, director for the Office of Traffic, Safety and Technology. “Most of these fatalities and crashes were the result of driver inattention and speeding, both behaviors we can change.”

Hietpas said MnDOT works to alert motorists of the work zone and sets speeds that are safe for navigating through it. He said when entering work zones, motorists should obey the posted speed limits, pay attention to signs and flaggers, be patient and not drive distracted.

“These work zones exist because we’re making roads better and safer. We’re just asking that people look for the work zones, slow down and put down their cellphones and other distractions,” Hietpas said.

To view the 2016 public service announcement by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, go to <https://youtu.be/cnFLLI4YiU>.

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