

## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# Work zone safety is a top priority

Work zones are dangerous places for both the workers and the motorists.

More than 130 people have been killed and more than 6,100 people have been injured in Kansas work zones in the past 10 years.

“I can tell you from my own personal experience there is no worse feeling than learning one of our fellow Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) employees has been hurt or killed within a work zone,” said Assistant Secretary Jerry Younger. “We need to work together to improve safety and reduce these tragedies.”

KDOT and other sponsors of National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, taking place April 6-10, continue to focus on educating the public on the hazards that can be encountered in work zones and ways to increase safety for highway workers and the traveling public.

“Work zone safety is a high priority for the Kansas Highway Patrol,” said Col. Terry Maple, Superintendent of the Patrol. “We are out there enforcing traffic laws to protect those working in and traveling through highway work areas.”

Of the nearly 1,300 crashes that took place in 2008 in Kansas work zones:

- ◆ There were **no adverse weather conditions in 84 percent** of the crashes.
- ◆ The crashes **happened during daylight hours 73 percent** of the time.

◆ The top contributing circumstances **were driver-related in 83 percent of all the crashes**, with the main cause being inattention. Other causes included failure to yield, following too closely and driving too fast for conditions.

KDOT has created a video titled “Behind the Vest” featuring several employees who have had close calls and Shirley McDonald, whose son, KDOT employee Scotty McDonald, was killed while working in a work zone. It can be accessed on KDOT’s Web site at <http://www.ksdot.org/bureaus/burcompser/podcast.asp>.

KDOT is also continuing its participation in the national Give ‘Em A Brake campaign, which focuses on improving work zone safety. A part of this campaign is a joint effort between KDOT and the KHP to increase enforcement in selected work zones. The program was expanded last year to include chosen short-term construction and maintenance projects.

Several tips to keep in mind when driving in work zones include:

- ◆ Pay attention to the signs and obey road crew flaggers
- ◆ Don’t tailgate and don’t speed
- ◆ Expect the unexpected
- ◆ Stay alert
- ◆ Be patient

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This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

For information about obtaining an alternative format, contact the Bureau of Transportation Information, 700 SW Harrison St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired – 711.