

Work zones, distracted driving, targeted in campaign

**(KAIR)--The highest number of work zone fatalities in Missouri history occurred last year. That's according to a release issued by the Missouri Department of Transportation, which says 35 fatalities arose from work zone wrecks in 2023, with distracted driving contributing to a total of 588 work zone crashes which resulted in five of the 35 deaths.**

**The release is timed with Distracted driving awareness month, held each April, while National Work Zone Awareness Week is set for this week, April 15 through 19. Using the motto "Work With Us," MoDot is asking motorists to do just that "by making safe, responsible choices behind the wheel and slowing down when driving through work zones."**

**The release notes that "it- not just a courtesy to slow down and move over for these work zones—it- the law," as is not using a cell phone while driving in the state. Drivers can face criminal charges for crashes that result in property damage, injury or death.**

**In 2023 alone, the release points out, "MoDOT work zone vehicles with truck mounted attenuators were struck 63 times, an increase of 27 from the previous year," adding that the "crashes are almost always a result of drivers being distracted behind the wheel and/or driving too fast for the conditions." It also acknowledges that "forty-five percent of those killed in work zone crashes last year were not wearing a seat belt and the overall unbelted fatality rate so far in 2024 is the highest recorded in recent years," with the release closing by saying, "wear your seat belt, put the phone down and help save lives on Missouri roadways" or elsewhere when driving.**

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