

The Henderson County Road Department will soon be starting to blacktop several areas throughout the county. Coupled with the state work currently being done on the bridges, it is a good time to remind our residents, “Don’t Be That Driver!”

“We’ve all seen the headlines: "Distracted Driver Blamed in Fatal Crash," "Officers Struggle to Enforce Texting While Driving Laws" or "Speed-related Crash Kills Five in Construction Zone." "Don’t Be That Driver!" reinforces the message that driving in and around work zones requires motorists to constantly be alert and be prepared for changes – changes that a distracted driver may not notice in time to prevent a potentially fatal crash. A driver distracted by an activity other than driving, such as eating, grooming, or using a mobile device, is up to four times more likely to be involved in a crash.¹

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. There are three main types of distraction:

- **Visual – taking your eyes off the road.**
- **Manual – taking your hands off the wheel.**
- **Cognitive – taking your mind off what you are doing.**

Driver-related factors that affect work zone crashes include speeding, in-vehicle distractions and inattentive or aggressive driving. The most frequently occurring type of work zone crash is a rear-end collision, so paying constant attention to traffic ahead and maintaining an adequate following distance is important in avoiding them. Cell phone use increases the rate of rear-end collisions, decreases brake time by 18 percent, and causes a 25 percent increase in erratic driving.² In 2014, distracted driving was a factor in 16 percent of fatal crashes in work zones, while speeding was a factor in 29 percent.

Work zones are dynamic places that can change from minute to minute. The presence of trucks (including construction vehicles), flaggers and queues, combined with reduced speed limits create an environment where being alert is critical. When motorists are alert, obey traffic control devices such as signs and pavement markings, maintain the posted speed limit and pay attention to traffic patterns, everyone's safety is enhanced.”

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/exit.cfm?link=http://www.atssa.com/Events/NationalWorkZoneAwarenessWeek.aspx>