



State of North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety

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Operation *Drive Smart* 2009 Kicks Off This Week

Crime Control and Public Safety and DOT Initiative Strives to Increase Work Zone Safety Awareness

RALEIGH — The N.C. State Highway Patrol along with the N.C. Department of Transportation will kickoff Operation *Drive Smart* 2009 this week. *Drive Smart* is an effort to reduce the number of traffic collisions in North Carolina's work zones. The Highway Patrol will set up enforcement and crack down on excessive speeders in some of the busiest work zones in the state.

"Speeding is the leading cause of traffic collisions in work zones," said State Highway Patrol Commander Colonel Walter Wilson, Jr. "I have instructed our Troopers to aggressively crack down on motorists traveling at high speeds and driving recklessly."

According to NCDOT, there were 2,381 work zone crashes resulting in nearly 1,500 injuries in 2008. Of these injuries, 21 were fatal. More than four out of five work zone crash fatalities are motorists. Speeding and driver distraction account for more than half of all work zone crashes.

"Safety is the department's number one priority and we work hard to keep both our work crews and motorists safe along North Carolina's roadways," said Transportation Secretary Gene Conti. "This effort will help us continue to build awareness in work zones and emphasize the need for drivers to slow down and use caution."

"The Highway Patrol is determined to reduce fatal collisions in these work zones, and going after speeders who recklessly endanger the public will help us do that," said Crime Control and Public Safety Secretary Reuben Young. "Operation *Drive Smart* is an effort to reverse the trend of increasing speeds in work zones by irresponsible drivers."

Operation *Drive Smart* is a campaign that will concentrate solely on speeding, aggressive driving and other traffic violations in work zones. Work zone locations for the operation are as follows:

Troop B

- **I-95 in Cumberland County**

Troop D

- **I-85/I-40 in Guilford County**
- **I-85/I-40 in Alamance County**

Troop E

- **I-77 in Yadkin County**
- **N.C. 24/27 in Stanly County**

Troop G

- **I-40 in Buncombe County**
- **I-40 in McDowell County**
- **I-26 in Henderson County**

Currently, there are more than 200 major work zones in North Carolina. Although most work zone locations for Operation *Drive Smart 2009* are on interstate routes, work zones are not limited to interstate facilities.

“Road construction and maintenance activities affect routes throughout North Carolina,” said NCDOT State Highway Administrator Terry Gibson. “With the high volume of construction projects the state will see this spring and summer, this enforcement initiative could not come at a better time.”

Troopers will be using motorcycles and marked and unmarked Patrol vehicles to target some of the state’s busiest work zones. Included in the crackdown will be commercial motor vehicle drivers committing serious traffic violations. These violations include driving over the posted speed limit, following too closely, improper or erratic lane changes, and careless and reckless driving.

During Operation *Drive Smart 2008*, troopers issued more than 500 citations for speed violations in work zones across the state. In addition, troopers also issued **188** motor carrier violations and 63 seat belt violations.

Motorists may report dangerous driving to the Highway Patrol by dialing *HP on their cellular phones.

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