

Illinois State Police to watch for distracted drivers in work zones

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Motorists are Reminded to Drop It and Drive

SPRINGFIELD – Officials with the Illinois State Police (ISP) announce that additional officers will be patrolling work zones as the construction season comes to an end. Although officers will be enforcing all traffic laws, they will primarily focus on motorists who are violating distracted driving laws.

“The purpose of the additional patrols is to ensure the safety of both the workers and the motorists traveling through the work zone,” stated ISP Director Leo P. Schmitz. “As the construction season comes to an end, we want to do what we can to keep work zone related injuries from occurring. You can do your part by remembering to drop it and drive.”

Unless it is an emergency, you must be age 19 and older and use hands-free technology to use a cellphone while operating a motor vehicle in Illinois. The use of hand-held cellphones, texting, or using other electronic communications while operating a motor vehicle is prohibited by law in Illinois. The ISP encourages motorists to also limit other

distractions that may be occurring while driving through a work zone. Please refrain from eating or drinking, using navigation systems, adjusting your music devices, or anything else that may take your eyes away from the road.

"Work zones can pose many challenges for drivers and require your undivided attention," said Priscilla Tobias, director of the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Office of Program Development. "Studies have shown that drivers engaged in activities other than driving are up to four times more likely to be involved in a crash. Please avoid distractions at all times and pay extra attention as well to first responders and maintenance vehicles working to keep our roads safe for everyone."

Distracted driving is one of the common factors related to fatal traffic crashes. The other three most common factors are speeding, driving under the influence, and not wearing a seatbelt. Together, they make up the "Fatal Four" violations related to fatal traffic crashes.

The initiative is funded by IDOT. The ISP and IDOT worked jointly to identify the locations best suited for the additional patrols.