



## Oklahoma City Glows Orange as ODOT Reminds Motorists to be Attentive and Follow Speed Limits in Work Zones

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4, 2014

PR# 14-014

The SkyDance Bridge near Downtown Oklahoma City will glow orange Monday as part of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's commemoration of National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 7-11. The event is a nationwide cooperative effort created to educate drivers about work zone safety and to remember those who dedicate their lives to roadwork.

A moment of inattention behind the wheel can have deadly consequences as well as monetary ones when driving through construction work zones. In commemoration of National Work Zone Awareness Week in Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and its partners statewide are educating drivers about work zone safety and the consequences of speeding and inattentive driving in roadway construction work zones.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation kicked off this year's National Work Zone Awareness Week with a gathering and work zone tour in Tulsa on Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup> as well as coordinating with the City of Oklahoma City to have the SkyDance Bridge displayed orange during the awareness week. In addition, Gov. Mary Fallin signed a proclamation declaring April 7-11 as Work Zone Awareness Week in the state, emphasizing the need for safe driving through work zones. Also, ODOT has been promoting work zone safety with YouTube videos and through the department's twitter account, @OKDOT.

This year's theme, "Work Zone Speed: A Costly Mistake" focuses on both the financial and physical costs of speeding in construction work zones. These costs include monetary fines and property damage as well as physical costs to workers and motorists, such as injuries or even death. Whether the sign tells of a work zone ahead, a reduced speed limit or increased penalties for violations, they all mean one thing: expect the unexpected and pay attention. They illustrate that there will always be changes in traffic patterns near and in work zones, and that highway workers, drivers and law enforcement must all cooperate to assure work zone safety.

Statistics show:

- Nationally, four out of five people killed in work zones are motorists or passengers in vehicles, indicating the way you drive in work zones has a direct effect on your own safety as well as the safety of the workers.
- In Oklahoma alone, 17 people lost their lives in work zone collisions in 2013.
- Also in 2013, statistics show 857 people were injured in 1646 collisions in Oklahoma work zones.
- Over the past decade, 171 Oklahomans have been killed in work zones.

Now, more than ever, with faster travel speeds and technologies such as cell phones and other mobile devices, drivers and passengers are more at risk for injury and death, especially in work zones.

Nationwide, 609 people were killed in highway work zone collisions in 2012, the most recent year of available complete statistics. Many of those collisions resulted from following too closely, traveling at unsafe speeds and driver inattention, this includes the dangerous habit of talking or texting on a cell phone or other mobile device.

As a result of recent funding increases from the state legislature, as well as a concentrated focus on improving the state's transportation infrastructure through Gov. Fallin's Bridge and Turnpike Modernization Plan, the number of construction projects on Oklahoma roads, highways and bridges continues to increase. These much needed improvements also bring a greater need to inform drivers of the inherent dangers of highway work zones and the need to drive cautiously.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation is making major improvements to your drive statewide by fixing bridges, replacing pavement and installing cable barriers. The locations of the orange barrels and cones may change, but the emphasis on safety stays the same.

Partnering with ODOT for Oklahoma's 2014 Work Zone Awareness Week are the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office, Federal Highway Administration, Oklahoma Department of Public Safety, Oklahoma Turnpike Authority and Association of Oklahoma General Contractors.

—[www.okdot.state.ok.us](http://www.okdot.state.ok.us)—

(Editors & News Directors: For more information, call the ODOT Media and Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)

INFORMATION RELEASE

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS DIVISION  
200 N.E. 21ST ST. OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105-3204 PHONE 405-521-6000