

## Experts urge caution on roads during 4th of July, warn of increased fatalities

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*KTUL road caution thumbnail*

TULSA, Okla. (KTUL) — Experts are warning drivers to stay extra alert as they hit the roads for the 4th of July.

The [National Safety Council](#) estimates that over 500 people could be killed on the roads this year.

Bobby Stem, the Executive Director of the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors urges drivers to be conscious of road and construction zone safety.

"We learned recently in a TRIP report, which is a Transportation Research Policy Institute out of Washington D.C., that Oklahomans are dying in work zones about every other week. In the last 48 months, we've had a little over 90 deaths, averaging out to be about one every other week. That means somebody died last week in our work zones and somebodies gonna die next week in our work zones," said Stem.

Stem wants to remind drivers to slow down when in work zones.

"Going into this holiday weekend please slow down when you're coming into the work zone. Respect the cone zone is what we're calling it. Everybody behind the barriers they also have a picnic they want to go to, fireworks they want to see, barbecues they want to attend, family they want to make sure they're with," Stem said.

Lieutenant Mark Southall with the Oklahoma Highway Patrol says that drivers should be prepared to see more people on the road and recommends drivers prepare their cars for long drives and take it slow, limiting distractions.

"The roads are gonna be busier than normal and so they've got to be patient, they've got to be alert to what's going on around them, alert to other drivers. Keep the road rage down, understand that it's hot, everybody's trying to get to a destination and here in Oklahoma we just want everybody to get to where they're going safely," said Southall.

Southall also warns against driving under the influence of any substance.

"Remember that if you feel funny you drive funny. If you feel like you've been drinking at all any amount of alcohol that you've been drinking it's safe not to get behind the wheel and be operating a vehicle. That's when we see a lot of mistakes happen, a lot of bad decisions and we don't want to see any hearts get broken," said Southall.

Southall explained that if you do see a driver on the road who is displaying signs of being under the influence, to stay away from the vehicle and contact the OHP.