

## Drivers reminded to be cautious in work zones

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Video: <http://abclocal.go.com/wjrt/story?section=news/local&id=7527403>

MID-MICHIGAN (WJRT) -- (06/29/10) -- Summer is in full swing and so is the orange barrel work zone season.

After several close calls in our area, construction workers are urging drivers to slow down.

Along with heat and humidity - orange cones are always included in the summer forecast in mid-Michigan

This summer, the cone count is higher than usual. "We have more projects going on. I think it has more to do with the federal grant money that's came in, so there's a lot more going on," said Aaron Lawrence from the Genesee County Road Commission.

That also means more danger for construction workers.

The Genesee County Road Commission has recently reported several close calls for workers. "We've had three trucks just this year that's been totaled out from people not paying attention and driving through construction zones," Lawrence said.

No one has been seriously hurt, but in the past, construction workers have paid the ultimate price. In 2006, a Genesee County Road Commission employee was killed as he worked on M-15 in Atlas Township.

"We know we're in their way, but we have a job to do, and that's what we're trying to do," said Lawrence.

Workers in the field say the biggest cause of work zone accidents is texting or talking while behind the wheel. Their statistic, based purely on observation, is alarming.

"You see them come through the work zone, and I would say well over 90 percent are on the phone," road worker Chuck Oertel said.

With many months of road construction season left, Lawrence and others urge drivers to slow down in work zones and keep their eyes on the road.

"I think everyone is in a hurry and everyone is strapped for time," Lawrence acknowledged. "These guys here have families, too, and they want to get home. They have a job to do. They want to do it and get home to their families."

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