

RALEIGH, N.C. -- North Carolina Highway Patrol troopers will be keeping a close eye on speeders and aggressive drivers in eight North Carolina work zones beginning this week.

Operation Drive Smart started Monday with a news conference in Johnston County, where work is under way on N.C. Highway 42 at the intersection with the new U.S. 70 bypass.

Included in the crackdown will be commercial motor vehicle drivers committing serious traffic violations. The violations include speeding, following too closely, improper or erratic lane changes, careless and reckless driving and any violation of the motor vehicle laws that result in serious injury or death.

The state Department of Transportation said there were almost 4,500 work zone crashes resulting in more than 1,500 injuries and 30 deaths in 2005.

Speeding and driver distraction account for more than half of all work zone crashes. More than 800 citations were issued during a similar operation in 2006.

Here are the eight work zones that will be the focus of troopers:

- Interstate 85/40 in Guilford County
- Interstate 77 in Yadkin County
- Interstate 85 in Rowan County
- U.S. 17 Bypass in Bertie County
- Interstate 95 in Cumberland and Robeson counties
- U.S. 70 Clayton bypass in Johnston and Wake counties
- Interstate 40 in Buncombe County
- Interstate 77 in Mecklenburg County

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