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APRIL 24, 2012

North Tarrant Express workers beg motorists to slow down, watch road - National Work Zone Safety Week



Earlier this year, a trio of workers on the \$2.5 billion North Tarrant Express project was out repairing signs at about 4 a.m. when a car driven by an older gentleman plowed into the back of the workers' pickup.


One of the workers was outside the pickup, so he

missed the collision the morning of March 23 near Texas 183 and Industrial Boulevard in Euless. But the two workers inside the vehicle were bruised and cut - as was the older driver, who was hospitalized and his Honda was totaled.

"It could've been a lot worse," said Kyle Freeman, safety officer with Bluebonnet Contractors. "Our guys were both still wearing seat belts. But the guy in the passenger seat said he was a second away from taking his off."

Freeman and several dozen other contractors and Texas Department of Transportation employees gathered Tuesday at the newly-poured Murphy Drive/Westpark Way bridge over Texas 183 to call attention

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to National Work Zone Safety Week.

Thankfully, they said, there have been no worker fatalities in the North Tarrant Express project, or the LBJ Express project in Dallas. But, as Freeman illustrated, there have been more than a few close calls.

Excessive speeding, alcohol and distractions such as cellphones are the most common reasons why drivers crash in a work zone.

"Put everything down that could distract you, grip the steering wheel with both hands and pay attention to what's around you," said North Tarrant Express spokesman Robert Hinkle.

The speed limit in the North Tarrant Express corridor is 50 mph, and police are stepping up efforts to enforce it, said North Richland Hills police chief Jimmy Perdue. Traffic fines in the corridor, which includes Texas 121/183 and Northeast Loop 820, can be doubled in a work zone, he said.

He said traffic in the work zone "self-regulates during rush hour," when roads are so congested it's usually not possible for drivers to speed. So the real danger for workers, and motorists, is at night, he said.

@gdickson

Photo: [fastlane.dot.gov](#)

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