

## An Important Message from Dallas Hammit, Deputy Director for Transportation

### Awareness weeks put focus on important safety topics

It seems like there is a day or a week to recognize almost everything. Most, like National Reptile Awareness Day or Watermelon Appreciation Month, are just for fun, but easy enough to glance over.

However, there are designated days, weeks and months intended to raise awareness of some serious subjects, and many of those are focused on transportation safety. I want to use this space this month to remind you of a safety-focused week that just happened and let you know about another upcoming awareness week that deserves attention...

In late October, we marked **National Teen Driver Safety Week**. I've written about this week [previously](#), but the topic is one that bears repeating. Observed this year Oct. 21-27, the week shines a light on the fact that vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the United States.

The week always offers a reminder for parents to talk with their teen drivers and remind them of the simple actions they can take to make themselves safer in cars. Those actions include wearing a seat belt, not speeding, not driving while impaired (or letting impaired people get behind the wheel) and avoiding distractions.

In Arizona last year, the month of October saw more crashes involving young drivers than any other month. In 2017, there were 5,106 crashes involving drivers ages 16-24. What we say and do matters, which is why I encourage you to make time to talk with your teenagers about their driving behaviors to help guide them to become safer motorists.

Coming up Nov. 11-17, we'll be observing **National Traffic Incident Response Week**. The week offers an important reminder that responders representing fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, towing and transportation agencies face a number of dangers when they respond to incidents.

We can all help keep responders safe by slowing down and moving over whenever we see flashing lights. It's the right thing to do, but it's also the law. [Arizona's Move Over law](#) requires all drivers to move over one lane, or slow down and use caution, when passing any vehicle with flashing lights pulled to the side of any road or highway — that includes emergency vehicles, tow trucks, ADOT trucks and even stranded motorists.

Of course, you don't have to wait for a national awareness week to focus on safety — it should be a year-round concern for all of us. I encourage you to regularly reflect on and improve your driving behaviors. As always, be sure to take any and all opportunities to talk about safe driving with your family and loved ones.

