

# Steve Stoler

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## Police: Barriers needed along 75 near McKinney

05:47 AM CST on Thursday, February 24, 2005

By **STEVE STOLER** / WFAA-TV

Attention is being focused on busy North Texas highways that have no protection from crossover accidents after three people died Tuesday on U.S. 75 in McKinney.

McKinney police said a truck speeding along 75 shoulder hit another car, skidded across the median and went airborne, hitting an 18-wheeler and landing on top of a convertible. The three that died included two in the truck and the driver of the convertible.

The area where the accident occurred near Highway 380 has a median comprised of only a grassy embankment, and McKinney police said median barriers would have saved lives.

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**Video:** Steve Stoler reports

"In this case, they would have careened off of those and they might have still been seriously injured, but they wouldn't have put at risk the public that was travelling northbound at that time," said McKinney Police Capt. Randy Roland.

The North Texas Tollway Authority is installing concrete barriers along the entire 30 miles of the President George Bush Turnpike after four crossover wrecks last year in which four people died.

The Texas Department of Transportation installed similar barriers on North Central Expressway between State

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Highway 121 and Highway 380 after a series of crossover accidents in the late 1990s.

"There have been numerous hits on that barrier wall, and there hasn't been one incident where a vehicle was able to cross into the other lane - so it's been very effective," said TxDOT district engineer Kelly Selman.

Under TxDOT guidelines, Highway 75 is still considered rural highway north of McKinney, and median barriers are not required. When that section of highway was built in 1968 it truly was a rural highway, but today 58,000 vehicles travel daily between McKinney & Sherman.

Beginning next year, the agency will begin installing a high-tension cable barrier system on a 13.5-mile stretch from Highway 380 to the Grayson County line.

"When a vehicle hits, the cables in between and the tension in the cables actually hold the vehicle in place and displace the energy," Selman said.

TxDOT engineers said the cable barriers are just as effective as concrete barricades, but less expensive.

"And hopefully with the increase in traffic on 75, barriers all the way up to our northern county line will not be far behind," Roland said. "Because we've seen in the police business that those things do lessen the tragedy of major accidents on our freeways."

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