



# PRESS RELEASE

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## TRAFFIC SAFETY PARTNERS STRESS DANGERS OF DISTRACTED DRIVING

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Highway Patrol (CHP), California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) and Impact Teen Drivers (ITD) are working together this April to remind Californians of the dangers of not giving the road their full attention when behind the wheel as part of Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports 3,142 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2019 nationwide. That same year in California, there were at least 18,698 crashes from distracted driving that resulted in 108 deaths and more than 13,500 injuries.

“Driving safely requires your full attention,” CHP Commissioner Amanda Ray said. “Distractions put you and others on the road at risk. Together, with our traffic safety partners, enforcement, and the cooperation of the motoring public, we can save lives and eliminate this dangerous behavior on California’s roadways.”

Distractions are not limited to cellular phones. Other electronics, children, pets, and eating or drinking while driving can also divert attention and result in a crash.

Breaking distracted driving laws becomes more serious this year. Beginning July 1, a violation for using a handheld cellular phone or texting while driving will result in a fine and also add a point to the driver’s record for each violation occurring within 36 months of a prior conviction for the same offense.

“Distracted driving is a serious issue that is 100 percent preventable,” OTS Director Barbara Rooney said. “That text, phone call, or social post is never more important than the task of driving.”

As part of Distracted Driving Awareness Month, the first week of April is California Teen Safe Driving Week. Throughout the week, CHP and ITD will place an increased emphasis on informing California’s newest drivers about the dangers and consequences of reckless and distracted driving.

“Parents, your kids have been watching you drive since they were in a forward-facing car seat,” Kelly Browning, Ph.D., executive director of ITD, said. “Your driving habits will become their driving habits – be the driver you want your kids to be.”

The mission of the CHP is to provide the highest level of Safety, Service, and Security.

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