



## **2019 ANTI-DISTRACTED DRIVING ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN**

### **Put Your Phone Away or Get Ready to Pay *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.***

Distracted driving has become a national epidemic—endangering passengers, adjacent vehicle occupants, motorcyclists and bicyclists, and nearby pedestrians. While we generally think of distracted driving as texting or talking on the cell phone, it can take many other forms: adjusting the radio station, applying makeup, eating, chatting with other passengers, or taking a sip of your drink can all distract a driver from the essential task of safe driving. Texting has become one of the most common, pervasive forms of distracted driving, and too many drivers are succumbing to this deadly—and often, illegal—habit.

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month. **The Department of Transportation’s Highway Safety Office** wants to help spread the word that **Connecticut** is partnering with **State and local police departments** and with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to step up enforcement and catch distracted drivers from April 2 to April 30, 2019 as part of the *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* campaign, a national high-visibility effort to enforce distracted-driving laws. Learn more about the numbers behind this dangerous trend.

#### **The Frightening Stats**

- Between 2012-2017, nearly 20,000 people died in crashes involving a distracted driver.
- According to NHTSA, there were 3,166 people killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2017. While this reflects a 9 percent decrease from 2016 to 2017, there is still much work to be done. In the last six years, 9.5 percent of all fatal crashes involved a distracted driver.
- Texting while driving has become an especially problematic trend among younger drivers. In fact, in 2017, 8 percent of people killed in teen (15-19) driving crashes died when the teen drivers were distracted at the times of the crashes.
- According to NHTSA, young drivers 16- to 24-years-old have been observed using handheld electronic devices while driving at higher rates than older drivers since 2007.
- Female drivers with a cell phone have been more likely to be involved in fatal distracted driving crashes as compared to male drivers every year since 2012.

#### **Safety Tips for Driving**

- If you are expecting a text message or need to send one, pull over and park your car in a safe location. Once you are safely off the road and parked, it is safe to text.
- Designate your passenger as your “designated texter.” Allow them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving. Cell phone use can be habit-forming. Struggling to not text and drive? Put the cell phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of the vehicle until you arrive at your destination.



### Put Your Phone Away or Get Ready to Pay

- When you get behind the wheel, be an example to your family and friends by putting your phone away. Texting and driving isn't trendy "normal" behavior—it's a selfish, deadly and, oftentimes, illegal activity that could kill you, a loved one, a friend, or a stranger.
- In 47 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, texting while driving is an illegal, ticketable offense. You could end up paying a hefty fine, and could get points on your license.
- If you see something, say something. If your friends text while driving, tell them to stop. Listen to your passengers: If they catch you texting while driving and tell you to put your phone away, put it down.
- Remember, when you get behind the wheel, put your phone away. *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.*

For more information, visit [www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov](http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov)