# 2019 APRIL DISTRACTED CAMPAIGN: POST-ENFORCEMENT NEWS RELEASE

PARTNER WITH SURROUNDING AREA AGENCIES OR SAFE COMMUNITY COALITIONS ON NEWS RELEASES TO AVOID DUPLICATION WHEN ISSUING TO MEDIA

EMBARGOED UNTIL WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2019

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## DISTRACTED DRIVERS LEARN DRIVE TIME IS NOT DOWNTIME

## DURING EXTRA ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN

*XXXX Drivers Cited put their Desire to be Connected Ahead of Road Safety*

[INSERT YOUR CITY/COUNTY NAME], Minn. – A distracted driver, glancing down to read a text, watch game highlights or shop online. The second they glance up could be their last second of life. That’s what law enforcement agencies in [INSERT YOUR AREA] tried to prevent by participating in a statewide extra distracted driving enforcement campaign. Officers, deputies and troopers cited XX drivers statewide for violating the texting while driving law from April 8 – 30, including XX motorists in [INSERT YOUR AREA].

More than 300 agencies joined the campaign coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety. Overtime funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration allows the following agencies in [INSERT YOUR AREA] to participate: [LIST ALPHA ORDER].

Distracted Drivers, Dangerous Drivers

Focusing on the phone while driving is a problem but so is dealing with spilled coffee, a messy burger and crying kids. Distracted driving contributes to an average of 53 deaths and 216 serious injuries a year (2013 – 2017). Drivers distracted behind the wheel are also contributing to one in five crashes in Minnesota.

“Too many hopes, dreams and lives are dying or forever changing because people think drive time is downtime,” said [INSERT YOUR SPOKESPERSON NAME]. “Distractions are real! It’s a myth to think you can multitask behind the wheel. When you’re driving, that’s your fulltime job. Please focus on the road, reduce distractions and speak up if you’re with an inattentive driver.”

[INSERT A STORY HERE — for example, an unusual distracted incident, excuses officers heard for driving distracted, a high profile crash to reinforce the message, or an officer with a high number of citations.]

Minnesota’s “No Texting” Law

In Minnesota, it is illegal for drivers to read, compose or send texts and emails, and access the web while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic. This includes sitting at a stoplight or stop sign or being stopped in traffic. It also is illegal for drivers with a permit or provisional driver’s license to use a cell phone while driving, except for emergencies to call 911.

Minnesota law states drivers can face a $50 fine, plus court fees, for a first offense. They’ll pay an additional $225 fine (for a total of $275), plus court fees, for second and subsequent violations of the texting-while-driving law.

**Speak Up and Join Minnesotans Driving Distracted-Free**

* Cell phones — Put the phone down, turn it off or place it out of reach.
* Music and other controls — Pre-program radio stations and arrange music in an easy-to-access spot. Adjust mirrors and ventilation before traveling.
* Navigation — Map out the destination and enter the GPS route in advance.
* Eating and drinking — Avoid messy foods and secure drinks.
* Children — Teach children the importance of good behavior in a vehicle and model proper driving behavior.
* Passengers — Speak up to stop drivers from distracted driving behavior and offer to help with anything that takes the driver’s attention off the road.

Distracted driving education is a component of Minnesota’s core traffic safety effort, [Toward Zero Deaths (TZD).](http://www.minnesotatzd.org/) A primary vision of the TZD program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. TZD focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes — education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma response.

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