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Your Agency

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April XX, 2019**

CONTACT: [Name, Agency, phone #, email address]

**[Your] Police Department issues [XX] Citations for Distracted Driving**

*Enforcement Effort Held During Distracted Driving Awareness Month*

[Your City] Calif. – [Your] Police Department cited [xx] drivers for violating California’s hands-free cell phone law as part of a larger effort to educate the public on the dangers of distracted driving.

“April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and it is important for drivers to understand the huge risks they take using their cell phones behind the wheel,” [Your] Police Department [Rank and name]. “It’s careless, dangerous and illegal. Drivers should keep their eyes on the road, not their phone.”

Under the most recent cell phone law that went into effect in 2017, drivers are prohibited from having a phone in their hand for any reason and can only use their phone in a hands-free manner. The phones must be mounted on the dashboard, windshield or center console, and can only be touched once with the swipe or tap of a finger to activate or deactivate a function. First-time offenders face a [$162 fine](http://gosafelyca.org/cell-phone-law/).

A 2018 [observational survey](https://www.ots.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/67/2018/11/2018-OTS-Distracted-Driving-Report-updated.pdf) by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) on driver cell phone use found about 4.5 percent of drivers are still using their cell phone, and more often to perform a function on the phone, versus talking.

“When drivers look down at their phone to read or sent a text, check GPS or scroll through social media, they are taking their eyes off the road, which is incredibly dangerous,” [Your] Police Department [Rank and name]. “There is a reason it is against the law.”

If you need to make a call or text someone, [Your] Police Department suggests pulling over and parking at a safe location. If you are unable to resist the urge and stay off the phone while driving, put your phone in a place you can’t reach, like the backseat or trunk.

In addition to phones, other serious distractions include eating, grooming, reaching for fallen objects, fiddling with the radio or console controls and changing clothes. [Your] Police Department encourages everyone to avoid distractions and go safely.

Funding for distracted driving enforcement is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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