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Statewide media campaign encourages Californians to ‘Get Off Your Apps’ and focus on what matters: Getting home safely

*April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month*

**Sacramento, Calif. –**  To highlight the importance of distraction-free driving, the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and California Highway Patrol (CHP) are making a statewide traffic safety push as part of National Distracted Driving Awareness Month to encourage drivers to *Get Off Your Apps* and think about what drives them to focus solely on the road.

“Whether you are driving to visit friends or family, or to your dog waiting to greet you at home, we want people to think about what drives them to get to their destination safely,” OTS Director Barbara Rooney said. “There are lots of distractions in our life, but we encourage all drivers to focus on what they can do to make it home safely.”

In 2020, a person was killed in a crash involving distracted driving on California roads about every three days. Nationally, 3,142 people were killed in vehicle crashes where distraction was a factor, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The numbers are likely underreported because law enforcement officers may not always be able to tell that distraction was a factor in a crash.

“Distracted driving puts everyone at risk,” said Caltrans Director Tony Tavares. “We are doing everything we can to meet our goal of zero lives lost on our roadways and in our work zones, but we can’t do it alone. We ask motorists to eliminate distractions and focus on their driving to make roadways safer for everyone.”

The media campaign will run through April 23 and feature a series of English and Spanish safety messages on video, digital billboards, digital platforms including social media and streaming services, and audio messages on the radio.

While CHP officers enforce distracted driving and other violations daily, on April 13 and April 28, they will focus their efforts on citing drivers violating California’s hands-free cell phone law as part of a statewide enforcement campaign.

Last year alone, the CHP issued nearly 59,000 citations for distracted driving.

“Reducing the number of people killed and injured on our roadways continues to be our number one priority,” said Commissioner Sean Duryee. “The CHP remains committed to public education and community engagement as core strategies in making California’s highways safer. Additionally, CHP officers throughout the state will be patrolling our roadways and taking appropriate enforcement action, when necessary, to deter unsafe driving behavior. The CHP will continue to partner with our traffic safety stakeholders and the media to ensure our public awareness programs and enforcement campaigns are effective in educating the public on the dangers of not just distracted driving, but speeding, impaired driving, and other unsafe driving behaviors.”

California law prohibits drivers from holding a phone or other electronic device while behind the wheel. This includes talking, texting, or using an app. Drivers under the age of 18 may not use any mobile communications device at all, whether hands-free or hand-held.

If you have an important phone call, text or email, or are in a situation with other distractions, pull over to a safe parking spot. If it doesn’t involve the act of driving, it can wait, whether that’s eating, grooming, applying make-up, reaching for an object on the floor, using an in-dash touchscreen, or putting on or taking off clothing.

To learn about other helpful ways to stay safe on the go, visit [www.gosafelyca.org](http://www.gosafelyca.org).

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