



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW TEXTING AND DRIVING PUBLIC SERVICE CAMPAIGN SHOWCASES "DEADLY THUMBS" AND THE TEXTING "TECHNIQUES"

Extra Distracted Driving Enforcement Is Thursday, Aug. 5

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ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) Office of Traffic Safety is launching a print and radio public service announcement campaign to educate motorists about the state's two-year-old texting-while-driving law. The campaign supports a one-day enhanced enforcement of distracted driving laws occurring tomorrow, Thursday, August 5. Around 100 law enforcement agencies are participating in the effort.

The campaign includes a series of print ads that compare texting thumbs to serious weapons — such as guns, grenades and aircraft dive-bombers. On the radio side, three spots mimic sensational TV news promotions from "Minnesota's station for news" and its investigative exposés on various texting and driving techniques. Download the creative at <https://mndeptpublicsafety.sharefile.com/d/s62363c9d1b74288a>, or visit www.dps.state.mn.us/ots and click on the "Distracted Driving" link on the left side.

The DPS campaign is also supported by co-branded AT&T television spots that feature actual texts sent or received by victims of fatal or serious injury crashes.

"We're reinforcing that there are serious dangers associated with texting while driving," says Cheri Marti, DPS director of the Office of Traffic Safety. "No matter how important you think the text you are sending or reading is, it's not worth endangering others' safety and causing a crash."

Driver distraction is a leading factor in crashes in Minnesota, accounting for around 25 percent of all crashes annually, resulting in at least 70 deaths and 350 injuries. DPS reports these numbers are vastly underreported due to officers' challenges of determining "distraction" as a contributing crash factor.

In 2008, it became illegal in Minnesota for drivers to read or compose texts/emails, and access the Web on a wireless device while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic, such as at a stoplight. It is also illegal for drivers under age 18 to use a cell phone at any time. There are other distracted driving laws that address a driver's duty "to drive with due care."

DPS offers these tips to minimize distractions:

- Cell phones — turn off cell phones, or place them out of reach to avoid the urge to dial/answer or text. If a passenger is present, ask them to handle calls/texts.
- Music and other controls — pre-program favorite radio stations and arrange music in an easy-to-access spot. Adjust mirrors and AC/heat before traveling, or ask a passenger to assist.
- Navigation — designate a passenger to serve as a co-pilot to help with directions. If driving alone, map out destinations in advance, and pull over to study a map.
- Eating and drinking — if you cannot avoid food/beverage, at least avoid messy foods, and be sure food and drinks are secured.
- Children — teach children the importance of good behavior in a vehicle; do not underestimate how distracting it can be to tend to children while driving.
- If you're a passenger, speak up to stop drivers from distracted driving behavior.

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