April 6, 2012

Law Enforcement to Target Distracted Drivers Texting or Using Hand-Held Cell Phones

During the month of April, the UCSF Police Department, along with 200 local law enforcement agencies and 103 CHP offices are participating in a month-long, life-saving effort. The goal is to reinforce to the motoring public the dangers of distracted driving and reduce the number of people impacted by this destructive behavior.

Danger lurks behind the wheel when a driver redirects attention from the road to some other distraction, like talking on a cellular telephone or text messaging. During the month of April, law enforcement agencies throughout California are focused on taking enforcement action on these inattentive, “zombie” drivers.

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) along with the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), Impact Teen Drivers, and law enforcement agencies statewide are launching the second annual National Distracted Driving Awareness Month campaign, “It’s Not Worth It!” During the campaign kickoff month in April 2011, more than 52,000 citations were issued by law enforcement statewide, four times the monthly average. A first time citation will cost a minimum of $159, with a second violation at least $279.

“Drivers need to ask themselves, ‘Is that phone call or text message worth my life or the lives of those around me?’” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “The answer is simple, it’s not worth it. Every distraction affects a driver’s reaction time, and things can change without notice.”

In recent years, hundreds of people have been killed in California, and thousands injured, as the result of collisions that involved at least one distracted driver. This distraction can be any activity that diverts the driver’s attention away from the task of driving.

To dramatize this behavior, zombies are being added to this year’s “It's Not Worth It” campaign. The campaign is supported by statewide grassroots outreach, social media activities and television commercials that encourage people to focus on the road and not be a “zombie” driver.

California’s traffic safety partners are asking for the public’s help in making this April’s distracted driving awareness campaign a success.

“It is important to note that the success of this campaign is not measured by the number of citations the officers write, because we are hoping that by calling attention to this effort we will gain voluntary compliance,” added Commissioner Farrow. “The success of the campaign is measured by the number of lives saved.”

Don’t be “zombie” drivers; focus on the task of driving when you are behind the wheel. Remember, whatever the distraction, “It’s Not Worth It!”

Together for a Safe and Crime Free Campus

Pamela E. Roskowski
Chief of Police

This alert is a public service to the University community and in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Act of 1998
Help fight crime by reporting suspicious activity to UCSF PD immediately. For emergency or in-progress events, dial 9-911 when using on-campus land lines and 415/476-6911 when using cell phones. For non-emergency calls, please dial 415/476-1414.

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