

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE _____

April 1, 2021



Contact:

Diana L. Klink
Office: 757.514.4104
Mobile: 757.359.1845

Tim Kelley
Office: 757.514.4103
Mobile: 757.871.3039

SUFFOLK POLICE REMIND YOU THAT APRIL IS NATIONAL DISTRACTED DRIVING AWARENESS MONTH

SUFFOLK, VA (April 1, 2021) Suffolk Police remind you to put down the cell phone and pay attention; April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month! While tackling distracted driving is important every day, April has been designated Distracted Driving Awareness Month in an attempt to focus on what is becoming a deadly epidemic on our roads.

This designation is even more significant this year due to the new law that became effective on January 1, 2021, making it illegal to hold a handheld personal communications device while driving in Virginia. Violating the law is punishable, for a first offense, by a fine of \$125 and, for a second or subsequent offense, by a fine of \$250. Breaking the law in a highway work zone is punishable by a mandatory \$250 fine.

Distracted driving is the cause of many tragedies year after year. A simple text message or phone call can result in the death of another human being. According to many national surveys, an overwhelming majority of people agree that texting and driving is dangerous, but more than half admit to doing it anyway. It may take only a

matter of seconds to glance at your phone, but, if you are driving at 60 miles an hour, your eyes were blind to the road while you drove the length of an entire football field.

As vehicle technology improves, today's drivers are potentially more distracted than ever before. Whether it is texting, using vehicle internet accessibility, eating on the go, or simply dealing with children in the backseat, there could be a lot more than driving going on while behind the wheel. To address some of these challenges, here are several helpful tips for safe driving:

- Make vehicle adjustments before your trip; changing settings on mirrors, music stations, or inputting addresses onto a GPS system are as dangerous as texting. Both take your eyes off the road and focus your cognitive ability on something else.
- Cell phone use can be habit-forming. Put electronic devices or cell phones in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of the vehicle to avoid temptation until you arrive at your destination.
- Avoid eating while driving or putting on makeup while driving.
- Need to send a text? Pull over and park your car in a safe location. Designate your passenger as your "designated texter". Allow them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.
- Limit the amount of passengers, and thereby distractions, inside your car – especially important for younger, less experienced drivers.

The Suffolk Police Department advises, "*Arrive alive, don't text and drive.*" Now is a good time to regroup and take responsibility for the choices we make when we're on the road.

###