

Illinois State Police announce 2016 National Distracted Driving Enforcement Campaign

April 14 2016 1:25 PM



ISP Joins National Anti-Texting Efforts to Save Lives

Springfield — April marks the National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. The U. S Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) are sponsoring the 2016 National Distracted Driving

Enforcement Campaign. The Illinois State Police (ISP) will be joining those efforts to crackdown on motorists who fail to abide by the texting while driving law and other distracted driving violations.

The ISP will be using a combination of traditional and innovative strategies to crackdown on motorists who text while driving. The national “*U Drive. U Text. U Pay.*” high-visibility enforcement campaign has two goals: conduct intense enforcement of anti-texting laws; and couple these efforts with advertising, media and social media outreach to inform drivers about the enforcement and convince them to obey the law.

“Driving and texting is not only dangerous and irresponsible—it’s illegal,” said ISP Colonel Tad Williams. “Drivers who break our state’s texting law will be stopped and fined. Texting and driving is a safety issue, and we’re trying to work toward a resolution by identifying violators. If you drive and text, you will pay,” Williams added.

Violating Illinois’ texting law, which became effective on January 1, 2014, can be costly. A first violation for this offense is \$120 and can increase with multiple violations or if a violation occurs in a work zone or school zone.

Distracted driving statistics paint a grim picture: In 2014, an estimated 3,179 people were killed. An additional 431,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers. It is clear that distracted driving continues to be a deadly driving hazard.

“Texting and driving requires motorists to take their eyes off the road, hands off the wheel, and mind off the task of driving. This is a conscious choice, and no one should feel they have the right to put another person’s life at risk,” said AAA Chicago spokesperson Charlene Sligting.

This April, AAA provided the ISP with an additional computerized driving simulator. The driving simulator is a learning tool that allows the user, typically high school students and drivers education students, to experience various driving scenarios in a controlled environment. The user actually utilizes a steering wheel, gas and brake pedals, and a large computer monitor to aid in the simulated driving experience. They are given distractions such as cell phones, videos, and passengers, which take their eyes off the road. The end result of the distractions in the driving simulator is usually a crash, or being pulled over by the police and issued a citation. This excellent tool gives drivers a safe way of seeing how dangerous and deadly distracted driving can be.

The successes of the *Click It or Ticket* and *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* campaigns have proven that the combination of tough laws, targeted advertising, and high-visibility enforcement can change people's risky traffic safety behaviors. The ISP asks all motorists to put their phones down and focus on driving, not distractions.

For more information, please visit www.distraction.gov