



NEWS RELEASE

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DON'T DRIVE DISTRACTED, FOCUS ON DRIVING

~ FLHSMV Announces Distracted Driving Awareness Month ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV) is urging motorists to eliminate distractions while driving in an effort to reduce distracted driving crashes statewide. The Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), a division of the FLHSMV, is partnering with the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Police Chiefs Association, Florida Sheriffs Association and AAA – The Auto Club Group to promote April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month. The FLHSMV has designated April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month in conjunction with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for several years.

“Distracted driving is an extremely dangerous driving behavior that can turn deadly in an instant,” said FLHSMV Executive Director, Terry L. Rhodes. “Motorists should keep their eyes on the road, hands on the wheel and mind on driving to *Arrive Alive*.”

Preliminarily in 2018, there were more than 52,000 distracted driving crashes in Florida. That means, on average in 2018, there were more than 1,000 distracted driving crashes every week. In 2018, April had the second highest number of fatalities from distracted driving crashes.

“Distracted driving significantly slows your reaction time and places you, your passengers and others on Florida’s roadways in danger,” said Colonel Gene S. Spaulding, Director of the Florida Highway Patrol. “Focus your attention on driving every time you get behind the wheel to eliminate dangerous and unnecessary crashes.”

To successfully avoid a crash, a driver must perceive a hazard, react and give the vehicle time to stop. Factors such as driver perception distance, the distance a vehicle travels from the time a driver sees a hazard until the brain recognizes it, and reaction distance, the distance a car will continue to travel after seeing a hazard until the driver physically hits the brakes, dramatically affects a vehicle’s stopping distance. Even a focused driver going 50 mph will travel nearly the length of a football field before coming to a complete stop. When a driver is not focused on the road, it limits their ability to come to a stop and avoid a crash.

Drivers under age 30 accounted for 30 percent of all fatalities from distracted driving crashes. Parents should talk with their children about responsible driving and always model safe driving behavior.

“At any given moment, there are multiple ways for a driver to be distracted,” said Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Kevin Thibault. “Not only does distracted driving endanger the person behind the wheel but also the passengers, fellow motorists, pedestrians and bystanders. It is up to each of us to make the commitment to drive safely. No distraction is worth risking a life – whether it be your own or someone else’s. Focus on the road. Everything else can wait.”

“Distracted driving and its deadly consequences has the ability to affect all who travel on Florida’s roadways, despite age, class, race or gender. The Florida Police Chiefs Association knows that each and every day, law enforcement must inform families that their loved ones have been killed or injured as a result distracted driving,” said Florida State University Police Chief David Perry, President of the Association. “This April, the FPCA reminds you to put down your phone and other distracting items while driving so you can focus on getting where you need to go quickly and safely. Life can be lost in the blink of an eye—let’s all do our part to create safer roadways for those who live in and visit our great state!”

“Distracted driving has resulted in tragedies for many of our families,” said Sheriff Mark Hunter, President of the Florida Sheriffs Association. “In response, the Florida Sheriffs Association proudly supports House Bill 107 and Senate Bill 76 that address the issue of distracted driving including the use of wireless devices.”

“During Distracted Driving Awareness Month, we encourage everyone to visit AAA.com and take the life-saving pledge to drive distraction free,” said Matt Nasworthy, Florida Public Affairs Director, AAA – The Auto Club Group. “Even beyond April, please keep your hands on the wheel, your eyes on the road and your mind on the task of driving.”

Visit FLHSMV’s [website](#) for more information and resources for the Distracted Driving Awareness Month campaign. The public is encouraged to report dangerous and drunk drivers by dialing *FHP (*347) or 911.

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[The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles \(FLHSMV\)](#) provides highway safety and security through excellence in service, education and enforcement. FL is leading the way to *A Safer Florida* through the efficient and professional execution of its core mission: the issuance of driver licenses, vehicle tags and titles and operation of the Florida Highway Patrol. To learn more about FLHSMV and the services offered, visit <https://www.flhsmv.gov>, follow us on Twitter [@FLHSMV](#), find us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Instagram](#).

This year, the FLHSMV celebrates its 50th anniversary and its Division of the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) commemorates its 80th year. Learn more at flhsmv.gov/behindthedrive.