



State of Illinois
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Heightened enforcement throughout Illinois for National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Extra vigilance comes amid rash of ISP vehicle collisions, two preventable tragedies

SPRINGFIELD – With National Distracted Driving Awareness Month starting today, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois State Police and more than 100 city and county law enforcement agencies are reminding drivers to put down their phones and focus on driving. In April, motorists will see increased patrols and enforcement zones across Illinois to ticket drivers using handheld devices.

“On any given day, you can glance into the next vehicle and see a driver texting, talking or scrolling through social media on their phone,” said Cynthia Watters, bureau chief of IDOT’s Safety Programs and Engineering. “If your attention is anywhere other than on the road, you’re driving distracted, and it can be deadly.”

Over the past decade, distracted driving has become one of the leading causes of vehicle crashes. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association, 3,166 people died in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2017.

“The Illinois State Police has suffered greatly this year with the loss of three of Illinois’ finest law enforcement officers. We have had 16 squad cars struck this year while on incident, with all emergency lights activated. Among the 16, two resulted in unnecessary and preventable tragedies,” said ISP Acting Director Brendan Kelly. “How many of these incidents could have been avoided if motorists were simply paying attention? Please show that you care about our troopers, all emergency responders, and your fellow citizens. Respect and obey all traffic laws and please, do not drive distracted.”

Illinois law prohibits the use of handheld electronic devices for any purpose, including talking, texting or using apps. Drivers under 19 are prohibited from using any electronic devices, even handsfree.

Follow these steps to keep everyone safe:

- If you need to text, pull over and park your car in a safe location.

- Identify a passenger as your “designated texter.” Ask them to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.
- Put the cell phone in the trunk, glove box or back seat until you arrive at your destination.

The Distracted Driving Awareness Month campaign is supported through federal funds administered by IDOT. It dovetails with IDOT’s comprehensive multimedia campaign, Life or Death Illinois, which highlights the incredible responsibility of each driver to make good decisions to keep our roads safe and to decrease the number of lives lost each year.

Visit lifeordeathillinois.com for more information.

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