**2020 *U DRIVE. U TEXT. U PAY.* CAMPAIGN**

**SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE**

**PEAK VERSION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]**

**CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, E-mail Address]**

**Note: Before filling in the names of the organization and organization spokesperson, you MUST contact them for permission to use their names in this press release. Also, you must get their approval for the language of their quotations, and any changes or additions they may require. Only after this is done should you issue the press release.**

**No Texting When You’re Driving**

**Law Enforcement Reminds Drivers:**

***U Drive. U Text. U Pay.***

**[City, State]—**April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and **[State/Local Law Enforcement Organization]** is joining law enforcement agencies across the nation to ramp up enforcement of distracted-driving laws, and to raise awareness about the dangers—and penalties—of distracted driving. This annual campaign is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) national *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* high-visibility enforcement effort that runs from April 9 to April 13, 2020.

According to NHTSA, between 2012-2018, nearly 23,000 people died in crashes involving a distracted driver. In fact, there were 2,841 people killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2018, 7.8 percent of all crash fatalities.

Millennials have become some of the most distracted drivers, using their cell phones to text, talk, and to scroll through social media while behind the wheel. According to NHTSA, young drivers 16 to 24 years old have been observed using handheld electronic devices at higher rates than older drivers since 2007. In 2018, 8 percent of people killed in teen (15-19) driving crashes died when the teen drivers were distracted at the time of the crash.

“We enforce distracted-driving laws to save lives,” said **[Local/State Law Enforcement Official]**. “Distracted driving often involves texting or other phone use, but texting is the most dangerous because it requires drivers to take their eyes off the road, hands off the wheel, and concentration off the task of driving. We want drivers to focus on the most important task: hands on the wheel and eyes on the road.”

Violating **[State]’s** distracted-driving laws can be costly. **[Insert State law specifics/fines]**.

Many drivers are guilty of a “double standard” when it comes to distracted driving. In its 2018 Traffic Safety Culture Index, the AAA Foundation reported that while nearly 96 percent of drivers believed it was very or extremely dangerous to read a text or email while driving, 4 out of 10 drivers admitted to doing so within the previous 30 days.

“The research tells us that people know texting and driving is dangerous and illegal, but they selfishly give themselves a “personal exemption” and do it anyway, putting themselves and others at risk,” said **[Local/State Official]**. “Beginning April 9, you will see increased law enforcement efforts, as officers will be stopping and ticketing anyone who is caught texting and driving. I want to be clear: it isn’t about racking up citations—we are trying to save people from themselves. If you text and drive, you will pay.”

**Drive Safe Every Trip**

**[Local/State Law Enforcement Official]** and NHTSA urge you to put your phone down when you get behind the wheel. If you need to text, then pull over and do not drive. If you’re driving, follow these steps for a phone-free experience:

* If you are expecting a text message or need to send one, pull over and park your car in a safe location. Once you are safely off the road and parked, it is safe to text.
* Ask a passenger to be your “designated texter.” Allow them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.
* Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.
* Cell phone use is habit-forming. Struggling to not text and drive? Activate your phone’s “Do Not Disturb” feature, or put your phone out of reach in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of the vehicle until you arrive at your destination.

Texting while driving is dangerous and illegal. No text or post is worth ruining someone’s day—or taking a life. Remember: *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.*

For more information, visit [www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov](http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov).

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