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Distracted Driving is Dangerous Driving

"U Drive. U Text. U Pay." Enforcement Period to Kick off April 1

NEWINGTON, CONN. [APRIL 1, 2021] – Today, the Connecticut Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office launched U Drive. U Text. U Pay., a national high-visibility enforcement campaign for National Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April. In partnership with State and local law enforcement and the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the campaign will step up enforcement efforts to enforce distracted-driving laws between April 1 to April 30, 2021.

Over the past decade, distracted driving has become one of the leading causes of vehicle crashes on our nation's roads. In Connecticut in 2019, more than 6,600 crashes were attributed to distracted driving. According to NHTSA, between 2012 and 2019, 26,004 people died in crashes involving a distracted driver. While fatalities from motor-vehicle crashes decreased slightly from 2018, distraction-related fatalities increased by 10%.

"Every trip on Connecticut's roadways—no matter how long or short a trip—should be a safe one," said Commissioner Joseph Giulietti of the Connecticut Department of Transportation. "We want drivers to focus on the most important task: hands on the wheel and eyes on the road."

Connecticut law prohibits the use of any hand-held mobile electronic device while operating a motor vehicle. Drivers who are 16 or 17 years of age are prohibited from using a cell phone or mobile device at any time, even with a hands-free accessory.

"Every time you pick up your phone while driving you are putting your life and the lives of others in danger," said Officer Timothy Budwitz, Hartford Police Department. "When you take your eyes off the road - even for just a few seconds - the consequences can be devastating. If you drive while distracted, you'll pay."

Violating Connecticut's distracted-driving laws can be costly. Drivers who are ticketed are fined \$150 for the first offense, \$300 for the second offense, and \$500 for the third and subsequent offenses.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation urges you to put your phone down when you get behind the wheel. If you need to text, pull over and park your vehicle in a safe place first.

For more information, visit www.distraction.gov