



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Sheriff's Department Working to Curb Distracted Driving in Rancho Santa Margarita

**Rancho Santa Margarita, Ca. (April 20, 2024):** Distracted driving is a dangerous and illegal behavior the Sheriff's Department is working to deter drivers from doing.

On Monday, April 22, deputies will focus their efforts on drivers that are talking, texting, using an app or any other action on their phone that is not hands-free and violates California's cell phone law. A violation is subject to a \$162 fine for the first offense, and at least \$285 for a second offense.

Distracted driving comes in many forms, but cell phones remain the top distraction. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 3,450 people were killed in 2016 due to distracted drivers. A 2018 observational survey by Fresno State and the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) found nearly 5 percent of California drivers were using their phone illegally behind the wheel, either by talking on or using their phone without a hands-free device.

In this day and age, it is natural instinct to answer the phone or read a text, but the focus for drivers should be on the road. Other distractions include eating, grooming, talking to passengers, using GPS, adjusting the radio, taking off a jacket, or reaching for an object on the floor.

If you have an important phone call or need to reprogram your navigation system, pull over to a safe parking place. To resist the urge of using your phone, either silence it or put it somewhere you can't reach.

Funding for this distracted driving enforcement operation is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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