



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Drivers are urged to keep their eyes forward and hands on the wheel

SANTA ANA, Calif. (Apr. 1, 2026) – April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month and the Orange County Sheriff's Department wants to remind drivers to stay focused, keep their eyes forward and hands on the wheel. Distractions like checking a phone, using the in-dash touchscreen or car phone app, adjusting the radio, or eating can have devastating consequences.

"Distracted driving continues to put everyone on the road at risk," Traffic Bureau Sergeant Kyle Ishii said. "When drivers take their eyes off the road, even for a few seconds, lives can change forever. We're reminding our community that safety starts with each of us. Put the phone down, limit distractions, and help people get home safely."

According to the [2025 California Statewide Public Opinion Survey](#), nearly 71.4% of drivers surveyed said that distracted driving, caused by texting or checking a phone, was their biggest safety concern. In 2023, there were [158 people killed](#) in distracted driving crashes in California, a 6.8 percent increase from the previous year. The numbers are likely underreported because law enforcement officers may not always be able to determine if distraction was a factor in a crash.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department will be actively looking for drivers throughout the month who are in violation of the state's hands-free cell phone law.

Under current law, drivers are not allowed to hold a phone or other electronic device while operating a vehicle, even when stopped at a red light. This includes talking, texting, or using an app. Using a handheld cell phone while driving can result in a fine, and if a driver violates the hands-free law a second time within 36 months of a previous conviction for the same offense, an additional point will be added to their record.

Follow these simple steps to stay focused and protect everyone on the road:

- **Put your phone away:** Silence notifications and store your phone where you can't reach it while driving.
- **Plan ahead:** Set your GPS, adjust mirrors and finish any tasks before you start driving.
- **Keep both hands on the wheel and eyes on the road:** Avoid eating, grooming or adjusting controls while driving.



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- **Be a role model:** Show your passengers, especially young drivers, that focused driving is the norm.
- **Speak up:** If you're a passenger and see the driver distracted, kindly remind them to stay focused.
- **Pull over if necessary:** If something urgent comes up, stop and park in a safe place before responding.

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



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