

Distracted Driving Enforcement Campaign Fact Sheet

October 5-19

This enforcement campaign is running during a Michigan State University research study. Researchers seek to determine if targeted safety messages have any measurable impact on driver behavior. Dynamic message signs will be used off-and-on during the campaign.

The messages displayed on the signs will rotate among; Arrive Alive Don't Text and Drive, U Text U Drive U Pay, Stop the Texts Stop the Wrecks, and Avoid Cell Phone Use While Driving.

Enforcement will be happening in two counties – Kent and Wayne.

The following agencies will be participating; Detroit Police Department, Michigan State Police (MSP) Second District, Wayne County Sheriff's Office, Grand Rapids Police Department, Wyoming Police Department, MSP Sixth District, and Kent County Sheriff's Office.

Dynamic message signs are located within the driver's normal field of vision. Consequently, drivers are able to continue observing the roadway environment while reading the messages. There are guidelines in the Federal Highway Administration Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices on the number of pieces of information that can be displayed, as well as the number of letters and rows of words that can be used. These guidelines are intended to minimize potential distractions.

In contrast, cell phone use tends to require greater attention from the driver and generally takes their attention away from the roadway environment. In the case of handheld phones, drivers also take one of their hands off the steering wheel. Handheld cell phones are a particular concern because they create cognitive (drivers focus on something other than the driving task), visual (drivers look away from the roadway), and manual (drivers take their hands off the wheel) distractions. These distractions also tend to be longer and more engaging.

According to the Michigan State Police Criminal Justice Information Center

- In Michigan in 2019, there were 18,096 distracted driving crashes, resulting in 70 fatalities. Of those, 31 were drivers, 20 were passengers, 17 were pedestrians, and 2 were bicyclists.
- In Kent County in 2019, there were 1,824 distracted driving crashes, resulting in 8 fatalities.
- The section of Alpine Avenue from Alpenhorn Drive NW to 4 Mile Road NW had 10 distracted driving crashes in 2019, more than any other road segment in Kent County that year.
- In Wayne County in 2019, there were 2,462 distracted driving crashes, resulting in 5 fatalities.
- The section of Ford Road from Hagerty Road to the 275 on-ramp had 7 distracted driving crashes in 2019, more than any other road segment in Wayne County that year.

- In Michigan in 2019, October was the month with the most distracted driving crashes (1,800).
- In Michigan in 2019, Friday was the day of the week with the most distracted driving crashes (3,099).
- In Michigan in 2019, the hour between 5:00p.m. and 6:00p.m. accounted for more distracted driving crashes (1,738) than any other hour.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

- In 2018, nationwide, 2,841 people were killed in distracted driving crashes. Of those, 1,730 were drivers, 605 were passengers, 400 were pedestrians, and 77 were bicyclists.
- It is estimated that 400,000 people were injured in crashes involving distracted drivers in 2018 across the country.

In Michigan

- Michigan law prohibits a driver from reading, manually typing, or sending a text message while driving. Exceptions are in place for reporting crashes, crimes, or other emergencies. The fine for a first offense is \$100. The fine doubles to \$200 for subsequent offenses.

Safety Tips for Driving

- 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.
- Designate your passenger as 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 cell phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of your vehicle until you arrive at your destination.