



City of Arts & Innovation

PRESS RELEASE

Police Department
SERGIO G. DIAZ
Chief of Police

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2014

Contact:
Skip Showalter
Sergeant, Traffic Bureau
sshowalter@riversideca.gov
(951) 351-6046

Riverside Police Department Joins Crackdown on Texting and Handheld Cell Use Behind the Wheel

Riverside, CA – As part of April's *Distracted Driving Awareness Month* campaign, the Riverside Police Department will be joining with over 200 local law enforcement agencies and the California Highway Patrol in a month long "zero tolerance" enforcement and education campaign to curb those texting or operating hand-held cell phones while driving. Officers will be on alert throughout the month for those who violate the cell phone laws and place themselves and others in danger.

The increased enforcement and education aims to persuade drivers to recognize the dangers of distracted driving and reduce the number of people impacted by this perilous behavior. The *"It's Not Worth It"* theme emphasizes that a phone call or text isn't worth a hefty fine or a collision. The current minimum ticket cost is \$161, with subsequent tickets costing at least \$281. Last April, in Riverside over 500 tickets were written and 57,000 tickets were written statewide for texting and held-held cell use.

Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. In addition, studies show that texting while driving can delay a driver's reaction time just as severely as having a blood alcohol content of a legally drunk driver. According to research, sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. Even a three second glance at freeway speeds means a driver has traveled the distance of a football field.

Research shows that there is no difference in the risks between hands-free and held-held cell phone conversations. Both can result in "inattention blindness" which occurs when the brain isn't seeing what is clearly visible because the driver's focus is on the phone conversation and not on the road. When over one third of your brain's function that should be on your driving moves over to cell phone talking, you can become a cell phone "zombie."

###

