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PRESS RELEASE

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Sacramento Region Law Enforcement Announce Results of Driver Texting and Handheld Cell Use Campaign

Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other.

Sacramento – Law enforcement in the Sacramento region recently concluded the first wave of their tough, new high visibility driver hand-held cell phone and texting enforcement campaign, “*Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other,*” and the results are in.

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) announced today that 2,923 drivers were cited for texting or talking with a hand-held cell phone between November 30th and December 9th. Law enforcement officials estimated that the count would have been higher, but both officers and drivers had to contend with the effects of high winds and rain for several days.

“As we complete the first wave of enforcement, we are hoping to see our message of “*Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other*” get through to drivers in the Sacramento region,” said OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy, “We are committed to saving lives on area roadways, and drivers should expect to continue to see officers enforcing cell phone driving laws time and time again.”

This was the first of three maximum enforcement periods in a pilot program using the region to test tactics that may be employed nationally in the future. OTS was awarded \$600,000 in federal funds for these special high visibility law enforcement operations.

Even with the increased publicity surrounding the first wave of the campaign, not everyone observed the strong warnings. The California Office of Traffic Safety, the California Highway Patrol, and 37 local police departments from Modesto to Marysville, Vallejo to South Lake Tahoe plan to continue their efforts to reduce the illegal use of cell phones while driving.

“Too many people still don’t understand just how deadly distracted driving can be,” said Murphy. “We want to make sure the message is heard loud and clear. If you are caught texting or using a hand-held cell phone while driving, you will be stopped and ticketed.”

(more)

The special “*Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other*” is a year-long enforcement campaign to reduce distracted driving on roadways in the Sacramento region. The next special enforcement wave will be conducted February 25 – March 10, 2013.

Distracted drivers talking on a hand-held cell phone or texting receive a first-time ticket costing a minimum of \$159, with a second offense costing \$279. The goal of the special enforcement operation is not to issue citations, but to raise awareness of the dangers of distracted driving and to keep drivers from being distracted by their phones in the first place.

- Turn off your phone and/or put it out of reach
- Include in your outgoing message that you can’t answer while you are driving
- Don’t call or text anyone at a time when you think they may be driving

For more information on distracted driving, please visit www.distraction.gov/sacramentoregion.

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