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PRESS RELEASE

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Sacramento Region Law Enforcement Cracking Down on Driver Texting and Handheld Cell Use

Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other.

(Sacramento) – The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) has teamed up with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the California Highway Patrol, and 37 law enforcement agencies across the greater Sacramento region to eliminate motorists’ hand-held cell phone use and texting. The effort is 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, which will occur at intervals over the next eight months.

Beginning November 30 and lasting through December 9, law enforcement in the Sacramento region will be out in force to issue tickets to drivers using hand-held cell phones or texting. Nationally in 2010, 3,092 people were killed, and an estimated 416,000 others were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver.

“Talking or texting on a cell phone while driving is one of the most dangerous actions you can take on our roadways,” said OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy. “So we are launching this new enforcement campaign – *Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other* – to offer a tough lesson to any drivers using a handheld cell or texting.”

Because too many drivers still don’t get the message that using a cell phone while driving can be dangerous and deadly, this initial distracted driving crackdown marks the first of many enforcement waves taking place over the next year. California’s distracted driving law bans all drivers from using hand-held devices and texting while operating a motor vehicle. Yet, in 2011, the California Department of Motor Vehicles reported 460,487 handheld cell phone convictions, up from 361,260 in 2010.

Distracted drivers talking on a hand-held cell phone or texting will receive a first-time ticket costing a minimum of \$159, with a second offense costing \$279. But the goal of the special enforcement operation is not to issue tickets, but to raise awareness of the dangers of distracted driving.

- 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
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Remember: *Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other.*

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