



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## OCSD to target distracted driving in special enforcement effort

**SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Ca. (March 25, 2019)** - The Orange County Sheriff's Department Traffic Division will launch a special enforcement effort on Wednesday, March 27, to target distracted driving in the city of San Juan Capistrano.

Distracted driving is anything that takes your eyes or mind off the road, or your hands off the steering wheel – especially texting and cell phone use.

A 2016 survey by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) showed that more than 44 percent of Californians cite texting while driving as the most serious distraction for drivers, with more than 54 percent saying they've been hit, or nearly hit, by a driver talking or texting on a cell phone.

Engaging in activities that pull a driver's eyes from the road, such as dialing, texting or reaching for a cell phone, increase the chance of a collision by three times.

Nationally, 3,179 people were killed, and 431,000 injured in collisions involving distracted drivers, according to 2014 statistics analyzed by [Distraction.gov](http://Distraction.gov).

Laws were enacted to prohibit cell phone and electronic wireless device usage among any driver unless the device is used in a hands-free manner. And any driver under the age of 18 cannot use a cell phone or any other electronic wireless device at all -- not hand-held, hands-free, Bluetooth, speaker phone, or any other means.

Cell phone usage is the most common distraction for drivers, but any other activities that pull a driver's focus from the road could warrant a citation. Although eating, applying makeup, reading directions or driving with a pet in the lap aren't illegal, if a law enforcement officer determines the practice is distracting enough to be dangerous, a driver may be cited.

OTS offers these reminders to stay safe on the road and prevent collisions:

- Never text and drive.
- Turn off your phone before you get behind the wheel.
- Don't text or call someone when you know they are likely to be driving.
- Make a pact with your family, spouse and caregivers to never use the phone with children in the car.



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SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

- Do not eat or drink while driving.
- Do not program your GPS, MP3 player or other devices while driving.
- If a phone call is necessary or you need reroute your map, pull over to a safe parking spot.
- Do not groom.
- Do not read.
- Do not watch videos.
- Try not to get too involved with passengers in your car.
- Finally, if something falls to the floor, pull over to a safe parking spot before trying to reach it.

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