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The Avon Police Department and the CTDOT Team Up to Kick off National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Put the Phone Away or Pay – Connecticut Enforces Statewide Campaign

NEWINGTON, CT – April 1, 2024 – The Avon Police Department is partnering with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) as part of National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. From April 1 – April 30, law enforcement will be looking for drivers who choose to ignore Connecticut’s hand-held mobile electronics laws. *Put the Phone Away or Pay* is a national high-visibility enforcement campaign for National Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April.

[Nationally in 2021](#), there were 3,522 people killed and an estimated 362,415 people injured in traffic crashes involving distracted drivers. **In Connecticut in 2021, there were over 5,600 crashes attributed to distracted driving that resulted in nine fatalities and more than 850 injuries.**

“Everyone knows texting and driving is illegal and dangerous, and everyone knows they shouldn’t be doing it—but we see it happen all the time,” said Lieutenant Rodney Williams. “Beginning April 1, you will see increased law enforcement efforts. Officers will be stopping and ticketing anyone caught using their hand-held mobile device while driving.”

Avon Police Department law enforcement Officers wrote numerous citations as part of last year’s effort to get drivers to put down their phones and pay attention to the road.

Connecticut law prohibits the use of any hand-held mobile electronic device while operating a motor vehicle. Drivers who are 16 or 17 years of age are prohibited from using a cell phone or mobile device at any time, even with a hands-free accessory. Violating Connecticut’s distracted driving laws can be costly. Drivers who are ticketed are fined \$200 for the first offense, \$375 for the second offense, and \$625 for the third and subsequent offenses.



The public is reminded of the following safety tips:

- When you get behind the wheel, be an example to your family and friends by putting your phone away. Texting and driving is not safe behavior.
- If you struggle to ignore your phone notifications, activate the “Do Not Disturb” feature or put your silenced device in your vehicle’s trunk, glove box, or back seat until you arrive safely at your destination.
- 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.
- Give control of your phone to your passenger. Let them respond to calls or messages.
- Never engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.
- Even when hands-free, do not stream or watch movies or videos.
- If you see someone texting while driving, speak up. Tell them to stop what they are doing because it is dangerous. If someone catches you texting while driving and tells you to put your phone away, put it down.
- Remember, when you get behind the wheel, ***Put the Phone Away or Pay***

For more information, visit distraction.gov.

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