



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

2000 MAIN STREET
P.O. BOX 70

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Kenneth W. Small
Chief of Police

CALIFORNIA 92648

Tel: (714) 960-8811

PRESS RELEASE

Release Date: April 2, 2011 **Time:** 10:00 am **Prepared by:** Lt. Russell Reinhart

Type of Incident: Distracted Driving Enforcement Operation

Location: City of Huntington Beach

Date/Time of Occurrence: April 4, 2011

Details:

As part of California's first *Distracted Driving Awareness Month* in April, the Huntington Beach Police Department will be emphasizing "zero tolerance enforcement" for cell phone use and texting while driving. In 2010, Huntington Beach police officers wrote over 2,800 traffic citations for these violations.

Distracted driving is a serious traffic safety concern that puts everyone on the road at risk, joining speeding and alcohol as leading factors in fatal and serious injury crashes. As a result, law enforcement across the state, including the Huntington Beach Police Department, is increasingly cracking down on cell phone use and texting. Starting April 4th and throughout the month, Huntington Beach Police Department will join over 225 local agencies plus 103 CHP Area Commands conducting zero tolerance enforcements.

Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. Younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes. 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.

There are simple measures drivers can take to minimize distractions in the vehicle:

- Turn your phone off or put it out of reach before starting the car.
- Alert callers that you are unable to take calls when driving by changing your voicemail message.
- Make it a point not to call or text anyone who may be driving, such as during the commute to and from work or school, especially parents calling teen drivers.
- If you do need to make an important call or respond to a text message, pull over and park at a safe place to do so.
- If going cold turkey is too much of a stretch and you just can't turn your phone off, consider using one of the available mobile phone apps that holds calls and incoming texts.