



2023 U DRIVE. U TEXT. U PAY. CAMPAIGN

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NHTSA and Law Enforcement Remind Drivers:

Over the month of April, The Seaside Police Department (SPD) partnered with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to make the roads in the community safer by focusing on Distracted Drivers (cell phone use while driving). During the month of April Officers did just that by working in addition to their normally scheduled patrol hours. During this time Officers conducted over 50 additional traffic stops. The reasons for the stops were for not just distracted driving but also enforced moving violations, driver's license suspensions and uninsured drivers with the overall goal of educating the drivers and making the roadways safer for all those in our community. Lower-level violations were met with verbal warnings but citations were issued when necessary and all distracted drivers were issued citations.

According to NHTSA, between 2012 and 2019 26,004 people died in crashes involving a distracted driver. While fatalities from motor vehicle crashes decreased slightly from 2018, distracted-related fatalities increased by 10%. NHTSA also reported that the number of deaths linked to driver distraction was 3,142 nationwide or almost 9% of all fatalities in 2019.

Millennials and Generation Z are the most distracted drivers, often using their cell phones to talk, text, and scroll through social media while behind the wheel. According to NHTSA research from 2017, young drivers 16-24 years old have been observed using handheld electronic devices while driving at higher rates than older drivers since 2007. In 2019, 9% of people killed in teen (15-19) driving crashes died when teen drivers were distracted at the time of the crash.

Violating Oregon's distracted-driving laws can be costly. ORS 811.507 Operating motor vehicle while using mobile electronic device. This is a class B traffic violation; first time offense carries a \$265 fine. A second conviction in a 10-year period is treated as a class A traffic violation, carrying a \$440 fine. A third or subsequent conviction within a 10-year period preceding the date of the person's current conviction is treated as a Class B misdemeanor (crime). In addition to any other sentence that may be imposed, the court shall impose a minimum fine of \$2000 on a person convicted of a Class B Misdemeanor.

The Seaside Police Department and NHTSA urge drivers to put their phone away when behind the wheel. If you need to text, pull over and do not drive while doing so. If you are the driver, follow these steps for a safe driving experience.

- 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.
- Ask your passenger to be your "designated texter." Allow them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.
- Cell phone use is habit-forming. Struggling to not text and drive? Activate your phone's "Do Not Disturb" feature, or put your phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of your vehicle until you arrive at your destination.