

# Placerville Police News Release



## For Immediate Release

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## APRIL IS DISTRACTED DRIVING AWARENESS MONTH PLACERVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT CHALLENGES DRIVERS TO 'SILENCE' THE DISTRACTION

### NEWS RELEASE

#### Placerville Police Department

Media Relations

Office of the Chief of Police

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**Placerville, Calif.** – April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month and the Placerville Police Department will be joining law enforcement agencies statewide stopping drivers who violate California's hands-free cell phone law.

On April 4 and April 19, Placerville Police Department will have additional officers on patrol looking specifically for drivers on their phones. Distracted driving is dangerous, especially when it involves a cell phone. According to preliminary data from the California Highway Patrol (CHP), 66 people were killed and more than 6,500 injured in 2017 from distracted driving-related crashes. *"Cell phones remain one of the top distractions for drivers," states Placerville Police Department Traffic Sergeant Dan Maciel. "Like any bad habit, it can be hard to break, but this habit can have life-altering consequences."*

A 2018 observational survey by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) on driver cell phone use found about 4.5 percent of drivers are still using their cell phone illegally, a nearly 27 percent increase

from 2016. *“That text or phone call will never be worth losing a life over, “Placerville Police Department Sgt. Dan Maciel. “That is why curbing distracted driving is high on our priority list.”*

Under the most recent cell phone law that went into effect in 2017, drivers are prohibited from having a phone in their hand for any reason and can only use their phone in a hands-free manner. The phones must be mounted on the dashboard, windshield or center console, and can only be touched once with the swipe or tap of a finger to activate or deactivate a function. First-time offenders face a **\$162 fine**.

If you need to make a call or text someone, pull over and park at a safe location. Struggling to stay off the phone while driving? Put your phone in a place you can't reach it, like the backseat or trunk.

Funding for distracted driving enforcement operations are provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

