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SANTA MONICA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Press Release

Traffic Enforcement Focus on Distracted Driving While Using a Mobile Phone

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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During the months of April, May and June, the Santa Monica Police Department's Traffic Enforcement Unit will focus on drivers talking or texting on cell phones.

Lieutenant Jay Trisler wants to remind drivers that it is against the law to text on your phone at any time while driving, and to drive while talking on your phone without a handsfree device.

The California law on talking on mobile phones while driving, one of the first in the nation, went into effect in 2008. The ban on texting while driving followed in 2009.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A VIOLATION?

- A person (of any age) holding a mobile phone in his/her hand and using the speakerphone, or as is most commonly seen, holding the mobile phone to the ear (whether on speakerphone or not), would constitute a violation of 23123(a).
- Juveniles are not allowed to use mobile phones at all while driving with or without an earpiece, and whether or not on speakerphone.
- "Write, send, or read a text-based communication" means using an electronic wireless communications device to manually communicate with any person using a text-based communication, including, but not limited to, communications referred to as a text message, instant message, or electronic mail. Scrolling for a name or phone number in a mobile phone, or entering a phone number does not constitute texting.

The Santa Monica Police Department suggests the following to avoid receiving a citation, or worse yet, injury or killing someone:

- Turn off your phone and/or put it out of reach while driving.
- Include in your outgoing message that you can't answer while you are driving.
- Don't call or text anyone at a time when you think they may be driving.
- Adjust controls and set your song playlist before you set out on the road.
- Stay alert and keep your mind on the task of driving. Often after a long day at work or a not so restful night's sleep, people's minds can wander when behind the wheel. If you find yourself daydreaming, clear your head and focus on the road.

For more information, please contact Sergeant Phillbo Rubish with the Santa Monica Police Department's Traffic Section at (310) 458-8950, or Lieutenant Jay Trisler at (310) 458-8471.