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SANTA MONICA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Press Release

Traffic Enforcement Focus on Poor Driving Behaviors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2014

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Each month, the Santa Monica Police Department's Traffic Enforcement Section focuses on different driving behaviors that are the primary causes for traffic collisions. Beginning in April, motor officers in addition to their normal duties, will focus on drivers who are talking or texting on cell phones.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A VIOLATION?

- A driver (of any age) holding a cell phone in his/her hand and using the speaker phone, or as is most commonly seen, holding the cell phone to the ear (whether on speaker phone or not), would constitute a violations of 23123(a) of the California Vehicle Code.
- Juveniles are not allowed to use cell phones at all while driving with or without an ear piece, and whether or not on speaker phone.
- "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 and would constitute a violation of 23123.5(a) of the California Vehicle Code. Scrolling for a name or phone number in a cell phone, or entering a phone number does not constitute texting.

The Santa Monica Police Department asks everyone to drive responsibly, watch the road and avoid being distracted by pulling to the side of the road before using any handheld device.

For more information, please contact Sergeant Phillbo Rubbish with the Santa Monica Police Department's Traffic Enforcement Unit at 310-458-8950.

Background

The California law on handheld cellphones went into effect in 2008. It was one of the first in the nation. The ban on texting followed in 2009.