



**Press Release**  
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**AGENCY:** CARVER COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE  
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**ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: SPEAK UP ABOUT DISTRACTED DRIVING**  
*Extra Enforcement on Minnesota Roads April 9 – 22, 2018*

Carver County, Minn. — A truck driver was allegedly looking down at his cell phone for eight seconds before he slammed into a car, killing a father of three. More than two football fields — that’s how long investigators believed the driver traveled in those eight seconds.

Eight seconds — that’s all it took to change the lives of a family who will no longer see their loved one, and a truck driver who potentially faces serious jail time for a choice to look away from the road. This is just the latest distracted driving fatality in Minnesota.

When it comes to distracted driving, enough is enough.

Starting April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Carver County Sheriff’s Office will take part in extra enforcement along with more than 300 law enforcement agencies across Minnesota. The distracted driving campaign that runs through April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 is coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (DPS-OTS).

“Who would run through the halls of a school or a crowded mall blindfolded? Only those looking to get hurt you might say,” said Sheriff Jim Olson. “So why would you do the same behind the wheel of a car? That’s essentially what people are doing when looking down at their phones. Enough is enough! Now is the time to change the culture, put down the phone, tune out the distractions and speak up if you see others on the road making dangerous decisions. Together we can save lives on Minnesota roads.”

**Distracted Driving is Dangerous Driving**

- Texting citations climbed nearly 23 percent from 2016 to 2017.
- Distracted driving contributes to one in five crashes in Minnesota.
- Distracted driving contributes to an average of 59 deaths and 223 serious injuries a year (2012 – 2016).

Distracted Driving	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Texting Citations	1,707	2,177	3,498	4,115	5,988	7,357
Fatalities	51	68	61	74	*41	
Serious Injuries	235	243	198	174	*263	

\*Preliminary Data

### **Campaign History (2015 – 2017)**

- During the 2017 distracted driving extra enforcement campaign, law enforcement cited 1,017 people for texting and driving.
- During the 2016 distracted driving extra enforcement campaign, law enforcement cited 972 people for texting and driving.
- During the 2015 distracted driving extra enforcement campaign, law enforcement cited 909 people for texting and driving.

### **Distracted Driving Behaviors**

Posting on Facebook, checking that box score or Googling information on a device while driving are all against the law under Minnesota’s “Use of Wireless Communications Device” statute, which is commonly referred to as the [texting and driving law](#).

Distractions that could lead to a crash also include fiddling with controls for music, eating and drinking, children fighting or an adult passenger’s behavior.

### **Distracted Driving Consequences**

- With Minnesota’s “No Texting” law, it’s illegal for drivers to read, send texts and emails, and access the web while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic. That includes sitting at a stoplight or stop sign.
  - \$50 plus court fees for a first offense.
  - \$275 plus court fees for a second and/or subsequent offense.
- If you injure or kill someone because of texting and driving, you can face a felony charge of criminal vehicular operation or homicide.

### **Do Your Part and Join Minnesotans Driving Distracted-Free**

- Cell phones — Put the phone down, turn it off or place it out of reach.
- Music and other controls — Pre-program radio stations and arrange music in an easy-to-access spot. Adjust mirrors and ventilation before traveling.
- Navigation — Map out the destination and enter the GPS route in advance.
- Eating and drinking — Avoid messy foods and secure drinks.
- Children — Teach children the importance of good behavior in a vehicle and model proper driving behavior.
- Passengers — **Speak up** to stop drivers from distracted driving behavior and offer to help with anything that takes the driver’s attention off the road.

Distracted driving education is a component of Minnesota’s core traffic safety effort, [Toward Zero Deaths \(TZD\)](#). A primary vision of the TZD program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. TZD focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes — education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma response.

If you need assistance from police, fire or medical personnel call 9-1-1. Anyone with information related to this incident or any crime is asked to contact the Carver County Sheriff’s Office at 952-361-1231 or use the tip line 952-361-1224. Our tip form is at <http://www.co.carver.mn.us/departments/county-sheriff/crime-prevention/crime-tips>