

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
FAIRFIELD COUNTY

Dave Phalen, Sheriff



PRESS RELEASE

Fairfield County Sheriff's Office
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – “Cell Phone in One Hand, Ticket in the Other” –
April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month**

[Lancaster, Ohio, April 2, 2013] April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and Safe Communities of Fairfield County reminds drivers that the new distracted driving laws in Ohio could find you with a “Cell Phone In One Hand, and a Ticket in the Other.” The new law makes texting and driving illegal in Ohio. For drivers over 18 years of age, texting and driving is a secondary offense. Teens, however, have more to lose if they have any electronic device in use while driving. The law is a primary offense for anyone under the age of 18, and can cost a teen driver their driving privileges, as well as a fine.

“Safe Communities of Fairfield County asks that drivers of all ages mark this awareness month by simply putting down the phone,” notes Teresa C. Carper, Director for the program. “Every time you send or receive a text you are taking your eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. Imagine driving blindfolded, and this gives you an idea of how dangerous this action is to yourself and others.”

Distracted Driving took the lives of 3,267 people nationwide in 2010 according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (National Center for Statistics and Analysis). Although the use of cell phones, especially texting while driving, has taken a lead in the cause of distractions while behind the wheel, distracted driving actually has a broader definition. Distracted Driving can be defined as anything that causes you to take your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, or your mind off what you are doing.

“The Fairfield County Sheriff’s Office supports this awareness campaign. Distracted Driving leaves drivers with a reaction time of someone who has a .08% alcohol level according to some research,” states Sheriff Dave Phalen. “What message or call could be more important than your safety or the safety of others?”

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has information regarding the hazards of distracted driving. Traffic Safety Advocates have taken up this safety message because anyone who texts and drives are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash. Their theme that “One Text or Call Could End It All” is a clear message that no message or call is worth the risk. For more information on Distracted Driving and other traffic safety statistics, visit their website at www.nhtsa.gov.

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