



Title: WPD joining state's first distracted driving week effort
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WPD joining state's first distracted driving week effort

Officers of the Wilmington Police Department will be paying extra attention to drivers who are texting this week, because as distracted driving is becoming more accepted by drivers, it's also becoming more hazardous.

From Jan. 1, 2016 to the present, the Wilmington Police Department issued 57 compliance tickets and 35 traffic citations for unlawful use of electronic communication devices — distracted driving. The department is participating in the first Illinois Distracted Driving Awareness Week in an effort to educate motorists about the dangers of texting while driving.

In support of National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and in an effort to bring attention to the dangers and consequences associated with driving distracted, Governor Bruce Rauner issued a proclamation and both houses passed resolutions identifying April 24 through 28 as Illinois Distracted Driving Awareness Week.

The Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police (ILACP), in partnership with AAA, and supported by the Illinois State Police, SafetyServe.com, the National Safety Council, the Illinois Insurance Association and almost 300 law enforce

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ment/fire agencies will work together during this week to educate motorists on all aspects of distracted driving.

The campaign will also include the enforcement of applicable state distracted driving laws.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

- 3,477 people were killed and an estimated 391,000 injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2015, a 9 percent increase in fatalities compared to the previous year.
• Ten percent of fatal crashes, 15 percent of injury crashes and 14 percent of all police-reported motor vehicle crashes in 2015 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.
• Texting while driving has become an especially problematic trend among millennials. Drivers 16 to 24 years old have been observed using handheld electronic devices while driving at higher rates than older drivers since 2007.

According to the AAA Foundation for

Traffic Safety:

- In analyzing 2009-2012 data, that even while more than eight in 10 drivers believed it completely unacceptable for a motorist to text or e-mail behind the wheel, more than one-third of those same respondents admitted to reading text messages while driving.
• Just as disturbing, even as fatalities go up, fewer drivers seem concerned about texting while driving. According to the Foundation's 2015 Traffic Safety Culture Index, significantly fewer motorists (77 percent) believed texting while driving is a problem, down from 96 percent in 2013, a 19-point drop in just two years.
• Texting while driving is more than just personally risky. When you text and drive, you become a danger to everyone around you.
SafetyServe.com is offering a short Distracted Driving Online Course, at no cost, during Illinois Distracted Driving Awareness Week to those who visit the ILACP Traffic Safety website, www.iddaw.org.