



City of Downey

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 2, 2012

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Downey Police Department To Hold Zero Tolerance Distracted Driving Enforcement Operation

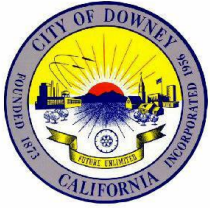
Downey, CA – As part of this month's *Distracted Driving Awareness Month* campaign, the Downey Police Department will be offering "zero tolerance" to those texting or operating hand-held cell phones on April 3rd and 18th. Drivers who break the law and place themselves and others in danger will be cited. The current minimum ticket cost is \$159, with subsequent tickets costing at least \$279.

Distracted driving is a serious traffic safety concern that puts everyone on the road at risk. As a result, law enforcement across the state, including the Downey Police Department are increasingly cracking down on cell phone use and texting. This April will see over 225 local agencies plus the CHP conducting zero tolerance enforcements.

"We take the issue of distracted driving very seriously," said Downey Police Department Chief Rick Esteves. "Cell phone use and texting while driving is such a serious concern that we are putting officers on the road to enforce zero tolerance."

Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. Younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes. In addition, studies show that texting while driving can delay a driver's reaction time just as severely as having a blood alcohol content of a legally drunk driver.

Studies show that there is no difference in the risks between hands-free and hand-held cell phone conversations, both of which can result in "inattention blindness" which occurs when the brain isn't seeing what is clearly visible because the drivers' focus is on the phone conversation and not on the road. When over one third of your brain's functioning that should be on your driving moves over to cell phone talking, you can become a cell phone "zombie."



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“Turn off your phone and put it out of reach as you get into the car,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “Think before you call or text someone. If there is a chance they may be driving, let it wait. It’s not worth it.”