



MEDIA RELEASE

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Sandra DiRuzza
Chief of Police

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2024 U DRIVE. U TEXT. U PAY. CAMPAIGN

Mamaroneck, NY — The Village of Mamaroneck Police Department is teaming up with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for the national *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* high-visibility enforcement effort. From April 1-8, 2024, law enforcement officers will work together to enforce texting and distracted-driving laws.

According to NHTSA, nearly 32,483 people died in distraction-affected crashes over the ten-year period from 2011 to 2020. In 2020, there were 3,142 deaths linked to driver distraction, or 8% of all motor-vehicle crash fatalities. This is an increase of 23 fatalities compared to 2019.

Research shows that Millennials and Generation Z are the most distracted drivers, often using their cell phones to talk, text, and scroll through social media while behind the wheel. According to NHTSA research from 2017, young drivers 16 to 24 years old have been observed using handheld electronic devices while driving at higher rates than older drivers since 2007. In 2020, 7% of drivers 15 to 20 years old involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted.

“Distracted driving is a leading cause of vehicle crashes on our nation’s roads, and most of this distraction is attributed to texting while driving,” said Chief Sandra DiRuzza “People know texting and driving is dangerous and often illegal, but they do it anyway, and it puts others at risk. Beginning April 1, drivers will see increased law enforcement efforts, as officers will be stopping and ticketing anyone who is caught texting and driving. If you text and drive, you will pay,” she said.

Violating New York State’s distracted-driving laws can be costly. [see below]

Violation	Fine (minimum/maximum)	Points
First Offense	\$50/\$200	5
2 nd Offense (in 18 months)	\$50/\$250	5
3 rd Offense + (in 18 months)	\$50/450	5

Penalties for probationary and junior drivers with a Class DJ or MJ driver license or learner permit

Effective November 1, 2014, the first conviction of a cell phone use or texting violation will result in a suspension of the driver license or permit for 120 days.

A second conviction within six months of the restoration of the license or permit (after the 120 day suspension is terminated) will result in

- a revocation of at least one year of a probationary license, or
- a revocation of at least one year for a Class DJ or MJ driver license or learner permit

Many drivers are guilty of a “double standard” when it comes to distracted driving. In its 2018 Traffic Safety Culture Index, the AAA Foundation reported that while nearly 96% of drivers believed it was very or extremely dangerous to read a text or email while driving, 4 out of 10 drivers admitted to doing so within the previous 30 days.

Drive Safe Every Trip

Chief Sandra DiRuzza and NHTSA urge drivers to put their phones away when behind the wheel. If you need to text, pull over and do not drive while doing so. If you are the driver, follow these steps for a safe driving experience:

- If you are expecting a text message or need to send one, pull over and park your car in a safe location. Once you are safely off the road and parked, it is safe to text.
- Ask your passenger to be your “designated texter.” Allow them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.
- Cell phone use is habit-forming. Struggling to not text and drive? Activate your phone’s “Do Not Disturb” feature, or put your phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of your vehicle until you arrive at your destination.

Texting while driving is dangerous and illegal. Break the cycle. Remember: *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* For more information, visit www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/distracted-driving.

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