



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth Police Department

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DATE: 04/17/2012
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Media Invite to Press Conference on Distracted Driving
CASE NO.:
INCIDENT DATE :04/18/2012
INCIDENT TIME: 11:00AM
INCIDENT LOCATION: Romano Gymnasium Lobby (located off Ordean Court)
SUBJECT: Media Invite to Press Conference on Distracted Driving
BY: DPD Public Information Officer Jim Hansen (218) 390-2232

On Wednesday, April 18th 2012 at 11:00AM the Duluth Police Department, St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, UMD Police Department and Minnesota State Patrol will have a press conference in the UMD Romano Gymnasium Lobby (located off of Ordean Court) to kick off the statewide Distracted Driving enforcement effort.

Minnesota State Patrol Lieutenant Jason Hanson and UMD athletes Shelly Stemper (Senior Captain of the UMD Women's Basketball team) and Jake Hottensine (Junior Captain of the UMD Men's Basketball team) will be speaking as part of the driving education campaign which will be anchored by increased enforcement on Thursday, April 19th, 2012. Nearly 400 city and county law enforcement agencies are partnering with the State Patrol during this statewide enforcement.

Driver distraction is a contributing factor in one-quarter of all Minnesota vehicle crashes annually, resulting in 208 deaths and nearly 26,000 injuries in the last three years.

In Minnesota, it is illegal for drivers to read, compose or send texts/emails, and access the Web on a wireless device while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic — even at a stoplight/stop sign, or stuck in traffic. It is also illegal for drivers under age 18 to use a cell phone at any time.

Minnesota's "no texting" law was enacted in August 2008 and citations have increased each year: 2008 (five months) — 93; 2009 — 294; 2010 — 518; 2011 — 784.

Tips to minimize distractions:

- Cell phones — turn off cell phones, or place them out of reach to avoid the urge to dial/answer or read or send a text. If a passenger is present, ask them to handle calls/texts.
- Music and other controls — pre-program favorite radio stations and arrange music in an easy-to-access spot. Adjust mirrors and AC/heat before traveling, or ask a passenger to assist.

- Navigation — designate a passenger to serve as a co-pilot to help with directions. If driving alone, map out destinations in advance, and pull over to study a map or program the GPS.
- Eating and drinking — try to avoid food/beverage (especially messy foods) and have drinks secured.
- Children — teach children the importance of good behavior in a vehicle; do not underestimate how distracting it can be to tend to children while driving.
- Passengers should speak up to stop drivers from distracted driving behavior.
- If making/receiving a call to/from someone driving, ask them to call back when they are not driving.

