

## For Immediate Release



Contact: Ekaterine Tchelidze  
Town of East Hartford  
Phone: 860-291-7202  
Cell: 860-817-8590  
etchelidze@easthartfordct.gov

### **Next Wave of "U Drive. U Text. U Pay." Campaign to Launch August 1 - August 15**

East Hartford, CT—The Connecticut Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Office today announced the second wave of the "U DRIVE. U TEXT. U PAY." campaign. Through this initiative, officers will be cracking down on motorists who text, talk, or distract themselves with a hand-held mobile phone while driving. The campaign runs from August 1 - 15, and is now in its fifth year.

"Too many drivers are ignoring their responsibilities behind the wheel," said Joseph Giulietti, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Transportation. "Starting August 1, the community will see an increased and highly visible law enforcement presence on our roadways as officers will be stopping and ticketing anyone who is texting and driving."

During the first wave of the campaign in April 2019, more than 10,000 citations were issued to motorists who "chose to ignore Connecticut's distracted driving laws," added Giulietti.

The second phase of this two-part campaign will also have special patrols aimed at saving lives and protecting the public. More than 50 law enforcement agencies, including East Hartford Police, who were previously involved in the April 2019 campaign, will again be participating.

Over the past decade, distracted driving has become one of the leading causes of vehicle crashes on our nation's roads. According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, between 2012-2017, nearly 20,000 people died in crashes involving a distracted driver. In fact, there were 3,166 people killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2017. While this represents a 9 percent decrease in distracted driving fatalities from 2016 to 2017, there is clearly more work to be done.

"It seems that every day, you can look out of your car's window and see another driver using their cell phone," said East Hartford Police Chief Scott Sansom. "We all have cell phones, and we're all on them all the time. But when you drive, you have one responsibility: Drive safely

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and responsibly. Do the right thing—put your phone away when you get behind the wheel. You just may save someone's life," Sansom added.

Since 2015, nearly 33,000 crashes in Connecticut have involved a distraction - resulting in 45 fatal crashes.

Fines in Connecticut for violations begin at \$150 for a first offense, increase to \$300 for a second offense, and are \$500 for subsequent violations.

For more information, visit [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov)