



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Highway Safety Office Promotes Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April

Press conference at Milton High School on April 5 will focus on distracted driving awareness for teens

Barre, Vt. – April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and the Vermont State Highway Safety Office (SHSO) in conjunction with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will be supporting state, county, and local law enforcement agencies in an effort to focus education and enforcement on distracted driving laws.

The goal of the enforcement campaign from April 6-10 is to make Vermont's roadways safer by increasing the awareness of the dangers of operating a motor vehicle while distracted.

On Wednesday April 5, at 10:30 a.m., the SHSO, Chittenden County Sheriff's Department, and Milton Police Department will hold a press conference at Milton High School to highlight the dangers of driving while distracted. Students will be invited to operate pedal cars through a marked course while attempting to text a message. The goal is to emphasize to students that when operating a vehicle, their focus should be on driving only.

From 2011 to 2020, 32,483 people died nationwide in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver, according to NHTSA. In Vermont, from 2017 to 2021, 1,168 motor vehicle crashes were caused by a distracted driver. It is against the law to text, or to use a hand-held electronic device while driving, including when stopped in traffic or at a red light or stop sign. Too many drivers still have not changed their driving behavior to fully refrain from using electronic devices while driving. The AAA Foundation reports that while 96% of drivers believe it is very or extremely dangerous to read a text or e-mail while driving, 4 out of 10 drivers admitted to doing so within the previous 30 days.

When driving, the most important task is driving. The SHSO's Drive Well Vermont highway safety program focuses on Vermonters' intentions to live well and treat others well, including when driving on Vermont roads. For more information about distracted driving and Drive Well Vermont, visit <https://drivewell.vermont.gov/>.