MONTEREY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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MONTEREY POLICE TO HOLD "ZERO TOLERANCE" DISTRACTED DRIVING ENFORCEMENT OPERATION

As part of our *Distracted Driving Awareness Month* campaign, the Monterey Police Department will be offering "zero tolerance" to those texting or operating hand-held cell phones throughout the month of April, with a special emphasis on April 4-5, as well as April 8 and April 22. 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 Monterey Police Department is increasingly cracking down on cell phone use and texting. This April will see over 225 local agencies plus the 103 CHP Area Commands conducting zero tolerance enforcements.

"Distracted driving is taken very seriously" said Monterey Police Chief Tim Shelby. "Officers on all shifts are being asked to enforce zero tolerance on these violations. Community members should really consider whether that text message or cell phone call is really worth $159."

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.

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