



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association Reminds Motorists to Keep Their Eyes on the Road and Focus on Safe Driving

PROVIDENCE – The Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association would like to remind motorists to stay focused, attentive and engaged when they are behind the wheel.

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving, including talking on the phone or texting, eating or drinking, talking to passengers, or fiddling with entertainment or navigation systems.

According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA), in 2021 alone there were 3,522 deaths as a result of distracted driving. Distracted driving poses dangers to everyone on the road, including other drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Texting is the most alarming distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for an [average of 5 seconds](#). At 55 miles per hour, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed. [Rhode Island law](#) prohibits mobile electronic device use while driving without hands-free capability. Additionally, minor drivers are restricted from using any mobile electronic device while driving – with or without hands-free capability.

As the weather grows warmer and people begin to enjoy spring and summer activities, more bicyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians will be outside. It is important for drivers to always be aware of their surroundings and focused on the task of driving.

RIPCA wishes to share the following recommendations provided by the NHTSA to prevent tragedies due to distracted driving:

- Turn off electronic devices and put them out of reach before starting to drive.
- 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.
- Designate your passenger as 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.
- Struggling to not text and drive? Activate your phone's "Do Not Disturb" feature, or put your cell phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of your vehicle until you arrive at your destination.
- Be good role models for young drivers and set a good example. Talk with your teens about responsible driving.
- Speak up when a driver uses an electronic device behind the wheel. Offer to make the call for the driver, so his or her full attention stays on the road.
- Encourage your teens to speak up when they see a friend driving while distracted. Teens can be the best messengers with their peers.
- Always wear your seat belt. Seat belts are your best defense against unsafe drivers.
- Be alert for pedestrians and cyclists, especially those who may themselves be distracted.

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A message from the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association