



Susana Martinez
Governor

Alvin C. Dominguez, P.E.
Transportation Secretary

April 16, 2012

Press Release

NMDOT reminds motorists to put down the distractions during National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) wants to remind motorists to put down the distractions, so citizens can reach their destinations safely.

Distracted driving is any activity takes away from driving safety, whether it is texting, talking on the phone, eating, using a navigation system, or changing the radio.

"Distracted driving crashes can be fatal and have devastating consequences," said Transportation Secretary Alvin Dominguez. "I hope all drivers will remember to keep their eyes on the road, their hands on the wheel, and their cell phones put away."

Distracted driving facts:

- 16% of fatal crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving.
- In the month of June 2011, more than 196 billion text messages were sent or received in the US, up nearly 50% from June 2009.
- Teen drivers are more likely than other age groups to be involved in a fatal crash where distraction is reported. In 2009, 16% of teen drivers involved in a fatal crash were reported to have been distracted.
- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent - at 55 mph - of driving the length of an entire football field, blind.
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported in 2009, 20 percent of injury crashes involved reports of distracted driving. In addition, 5,474 people were killed on U.S. roadways and an estimated 448,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes that were reported to have involved distracted driving.

In the state of New Mexico, cell phone use is prohibited in all state vehicles. Gallup, Taos, Espanola, Las Cruces, Roswell, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque have all passed local cell phone ordinances banning hand-held devices while driving a motor vehicle.

In addition, the NMDOT will introduce an enforcement and media campaign that will specifically target distracted driving as part of the upcoming "100 Days and Nights" of summer campaign.

Additional Distracted Driving information is available at www.distraction.gov.

Contact Manon Arnett, NMDOT Public Information Officer for additional information, at (505) 827-5526.

###