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OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

TEN YEARS OF HANDS-FREE LAW: CHALLENGES REMAIN

Put Your Phone Down. Just Drive!

March 30, 2018

Burbank, California – Drivers are using their cell phones less often while driving, 10 years after “hands-free” became the law, but distracted driving remains a serious safety challenge in California. Observing April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month and the first week in April as California Teen Safe Driving Week, safety advocates will focus on education and enforcement efforts statewide.

The Burbank Police Department will join law enforcement throughout the state to step up enforcement and discourage distracted driving. April 5th and 13th have been designated as the two statewide enforcement dates when law enforcement agencies will increase distracted driving enforcement activities.

Using grant-funded resources, Burbank Police will deploy extra traffic officers in specific locations and areas with higher numbers of traffic collisions. Violators will be stopped and cited with fines set at \$162 for first time offenders. This campaign is funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

“California’s distracted driving laws have been saving lives for a decade now,” said former State Senator Joe Simitian, who authored the state’s hands-free and no-texting laws. *“Every day, somewhere in California, someone is sitting down to dinner with their family who wouldn’t have made it through the day without these laws on the books. That’s tremendously gratifying.”*

Preliminary 2017 data shows nearly 22,000 drivers were involved in distracted driving collisions in California, a decline from the more than 33,000 drivers involved in distracted driving collisions in 2007, the last full year before the hands-free law went into effect.

REMEMBER:

- If you receive a text message or need to send one, pull over and park your car in a safe location, but ‘never’ on a freeway. Once you are safely off the road and stopped, 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.
- Cell phone use can be habit-forming. Struggling to not text and drive? Put the cell phone in the trunk or back seat of your vehicle until you arrive at your final destination.

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QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS STATEMENT SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:
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