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EYES FORWARD. HANDS ON THE WHEEL. JUST DRIVE.

Our highways are busier than ever. In the 1980's there were 15 million drivers in California (*Federal Highway Administration*). That number has doubled to nearly 30 million. Many of us try not to speed, tailgate, or cut people off. But the reality is that most crashes are caused by people simply not paying attention.

By far, using your phone is the most dangerous of these distractions. It accounts for 80% of all distracted driving accidents. Reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 MPH, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed (*U.S. Department of Transportation*).

California's definition of a hands-free system states that a phone must be mounted on the windshield or dashboard in a way that doesn't hinder the driver's view of the road, and the driver's hand must be able to activate or deactivate it **with a single swipe or tap**. Over the years, drivers have looked for loopholes in these laws. Don't try it. The state has responded in force with more laws and stricter rules.

You can only use a handheld device in an emergency *to call law enforcement or another emergency service provider*. Otherwise, only police, fire and emergency

medical units, and tow truck drivers may use their cell phones when they are on duty.

It only takes a second to crash. These distractions are not worth the risk:

- Applying makeup
- Eating
- Texting, scrolling, or talking on the phone
- Adjusting the radio or GPS settings
- Selfies or videos
- Cranking up the music so that you can't hear sirens

Before taking off, put your phone in silent mode. Put your passengers to work as a navigator and designated texter. If you are alone and can't handle the temptation to use your phone, try putting it in the trunk before getting into the car. This simple act can save a life – it might be your own.

The Consequences

As part of the national campaign, you may see an increase in police enforcing distracted driving laws during the week of April 7 – 14. These citations are considered moving violations. And although the fee is set at \$162.00, court costs are added that can be far more than the ticket itself. Second offenses are even more.

Campus roads are owned by the state of California and are legal streets. Drivers on campus are **not** exempt from traffic laws, including distracted driver. You may be ticketed by the University Police Department for moving violations just like any other municipality. You should know that they also have equal authority outside the university and its surrounding areas.

Low Speed Vehicles on Campus: these may be golf carts, club cars, utility carts or trucks, or escort shuttles. The University Police Department maintains the right to ticket cart drivers for moving violations and the same distracted driver rules apply. Never assume that these vehicles cannot cause damage or injury.

Quick links:

[National 'Put the Phone Away or Pay' Campaign](#)

[California's new vehicle laws for 2025](#)

For Emergencies Call 911

The University Police Department has a non-emergency number. It's a good idea to include it in your phone contacts when you want general information: (310) 243-3639.

This safety message brought to you by:

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