

**CONNECTICUT TEXTING BAN  
ENFORCEMENT DEMONSTRATION  
PROJECT**

PHONE IN ONE HAND.  
TICKET IN THE OTHER.  
WAVE 2



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10-8-13**

**State and Local Police Agencies Continue Enforcement  
Crackdown to Stop Distracted Driving  
*Connecticut Not Giving Up on  
Increasing Driver Awareness and Saving Lives***

[Danbury, CONN.] – Connecticut drivers beware. Police in Danbury and Northern Fairfield County will again be out in force beginning October 9, to make sure drivers keep their eyes on the road and hands on the wheel as the campaign to stop texting while driving. Law enforcement officers will be sending the strong message that anyone pulled over for texting or talking on their hand-held phone while driving will be fined.

Violating Connecticut’s new cell phone and texting law, which became effective on October 1<sup>st</sup>, can be costly. Fines range from \$150 for a first offense, \$300 for a second violation, and \$500 for each subsequent violation. Texting and using a cell phone are now a moving violation, and the law allows reporting of distracted driving offenses to insurance companies, which can mean higher premiums for violators.

“Just like wearing a seat belt or not drinking and driving, when it comes to texting while driving, drivers have a choice to do the right thing. We hope that everyone heeds this warning and pays attention to the road and not their phones,” said Monroe Chief of Police John Salvatore.

In a continuing effort to save lives and stop the deadly practice of texting and driving, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and local law enforcement are partnering again with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to help identify effective strategies for enforcing laws banning texting and driving.

Stepped-up law enforcement activities will be taking place beginning on October 9 and ending on October 15, 2013. This crackdown marks the second of four enforcement waves taking place through the summer of 2014. “The first crackdown held in June, coupled with the media campaign ‘*PHONE IN ONE HAND. TICKET IN THE OTHER*’, was a success,” Lt. J. Paul Vance of the Connecticut State Police remarked. He said that more than 1,128 hand-held cell phone and texting citations were handed out.

The four enforcement waves being conducted are an expansion of an earlier, city-wide pilot project undertaken in Hartford in 2010. That project was designed to examine whether increased police enforcement coupled with earned and paid media could significantly reduce distracted driving over a widespread area. At the end of the pilot project, texting dropped 72 percent in Hartford.

High-visibility enforcement strategies such as spotters placed at strategic locations are having a big impact on curtailing the hard-to-detect texting practices of some drivers.

“The sad reality is while we caught more than 1,128 violators of the law, there are still many drivers out there who still haven’t gotten the message,” said Lt. Vance.

This may be because a lot of drivers don’t realize the true dangers of using a cell phone while driving, but according to a recent study from the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, engaging in visual-manual subtasks (such as reaching for a phone, dialing and texting) associated with the use of hand-held phones and other portable devices increased the risk of getting into a crash by three times, explained Department of Transportation Commissioner James Redeker.

He stated that in 2011, 3,331 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver, and an additional, 387,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver. “These numbers may seem like just statistics, but we know that even one life lost is too many,” said Commissioner Redeker.

So remember, if you are pulled-over for disobeying traffic laws, law enforcement **WILL** be checking to make sure you are not texting or talking on a hand-held cell phone. “No more excuses, no more exceptions, *‘PHONE IN ONE HAND. TICKET IN THE OTHER’*,” said Chief Salvatore.

For more information, please visit [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov).

###