



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Contact: Det. Sgt. Jay Phares, Miami Township Police Department
(937) 433-2301

MTPD to crack down on distracted driving

Distracted Driving Blitz in April

The Miami Township Police Department is partnering with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to keep drivers safe on area roadways. The MTPD will focus on distracted driving violations throughout April, with extra patrols during the first five days of the month.

The *Distracted Driving Blitz* is funded through the Ohio Safety Grant awarded to the Miami Township Police Department in 2020 by the NHTSA. It allows officers to focus more attention on reducing traffic crashes, increasing OVI patrols and participating in national safety campaigns. Most recently, grant funds were used for the *St. Patrick's Day Blitz*, *Super Bowl Blitz*, *Click or Ticket* and *Driver Sober or Get Pulled Over* campaigns.

"Anytime motorists get behind the wheel, focusing on the road should be their only priority," Det. Sgt. Jay Phares, Miami Township Police Department, said. "Anything that takes your attention away from driving can be deadly."

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The NHTSA and MTPD offer this advice to avoid distracted driving:

- Turn off electronic devices and put them out of reach before starting to drive.
- 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.
- 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.

In 2019, the NHTSA reports that 3,142 people were killed in crashes involving distracted drivers. In the state of Ohio, it is against the law for anyone 18 years old or younger to use a cell phone while driving. It is also illegal for anyone to text while driving. Violators can be fined up to \$150 and teen drivers can also have their license suspended for 60 days.

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