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PRESS RELEASE

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Date: 03/11/2015

Crackdown on Texting and Handheld Cell Use Behind the Wheel

“It’s Not Worth It!”

As part of April’s *Distracted Driving Awareness Month* campaign, Milpitas Police Department will be joining with over 200 other local law enforcement agencies and the California Highway Patrol in a month long “zero tolerance” enforcement campaign to curb those texting or operating hand-held cell phones while driving. Officers will be on alert throughout the month for those who break the cell phone laws and place themselves and others in danger.

The increased enforcement aims to persuade drivers to recognize the dangers of distracted driving and reduce the number of people impacted by this perilous behavior. The “*It’s Not Worth It!*” theme emphasizes that a phone call or text isn’t worth a hefty fine or a collision. The current minimum ticket cost is \$161, with subsequent tickets costing at least \$281.

Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. In addition, studies show that texting while driving can delay a driver’s reaction time just as severely as having a blood alcohol content of a legally drunk driver. According to research, sending or receiving a text takes a driver’s eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. Even a three second glance at freeway speeds means a driver has traveled the distance of a football field.

Research shows that there is no difference in the risks between hands-free and hand-held cell phone conversations, both of which can result in “inattention blindness” which occurs when the brain isn’t seeing what is clearly visible because the drivers’ focus is on the phone conversation and not on the road. When over one third of your brain’s functioning that should be on your driving moves over to cell phone talking, you can become a cell phone “zombie.”

