

# News Release

## **Oakland County Board encourages motorists to ‘just drive’**

*Resolution introduced by Commissioner Kowall brings attention to risks of distracted driving*

**March 31, 2022, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI.** – The Oakland County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to recognize April 2022 as Distracted Driving Awareness Month in Oakland County at its meeting on March 24. Introduced by Commissioner **Eileen T. Kowall** (R-White Lake), the resolution acknowledges the life-threatening impacts of distracted driving and encourages all motorists to commit to safe driving behaviors. By designating a month to raise awareness of distracted driving, the Board aims to educate Oakland County residents about the importance of remaining focused while operating a vehicle.

“Distracted driving impacts all of us,” Kowall said. “Staying focused on driving is within all of our control. Although you may only take your eyes off the road for a second, maybe to read a text message or reach for a snack, that’s all it takes to make a choice with consequences that last forever. The effect of distracted driving isn’t only about how you are impacted, but how your decision impacts other drivers, pedestrians or road workers.”

The National Safety Council (NSC), which leads Distracted Driving Month nationally, estimates that in 2018, more than 2,800 people in the U.S. died in distraction-related crashes. At least seven people died per day, with an estimated 400,000 injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers annually.

“As a former fatal accident investigator, I can tell you distracted driving kills,” Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard said. “Please remain focused on your primary job of being a safe driver when behind the steering wheel and leave everything else to its proper time.”

According to AAA’s 2017 traffic safety culture index, 96.8 percent of respondents view drivers texting or emailing while driving as a serious threat, however 44.9 percent also reported that they had read a text message or email while driving within the last month of taking the survey. This comparison marks a difference between how drivers feel about distracted driving and their actions.

Kowall encourages motorists to take the NSC’s safety pledge. By agreeing to “Just Drive,” motorists promise to not have phone conversations, use voice-to-text features, use phone applications or contact

other people when they are driving. To sign the pledge, visit <https://www.nsc.org/faforms/ddam-pledge>. In addition to promoting the pledge, the Board has planned an awareness campaign around the county campus and in the community to discourage distracted driving.

For more information about the Board of Commissioners, visit [www.oakgov.com/boc](http://www.oakgov.com/boc) or call 248-858-0100.

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