

NEWS RELEASE

Oakland County Board recognizes April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Resolution introduced by Commissioner Kowall brings attention to risks of distracted driving, encourages residents to sign safety pledge

March 31, 2021, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – The Oakland County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to recognize April 2021 as Distracted Driving Awareness Month in Oakland County at its meeting on March 25. Introduced by Commissioner **Eileen T. Kowall** (R-White Lake), the resolution acknowledges the life-threatening impacts of distracted driving and encourages Oakland County residents to sign the National Safety Council's (NSC) Just Drive safety pledge. 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.

"We need to focus on distracted driving as an issue that impacts all of us," Commissioner Kowall said. "The statistics are devastating. It may only seem like few seconds to answer a call or text, but those few moments spent not focusing on what's in front of you could have tragic consequences for yourself, other drivers, road workers, pedestrians and the community."

A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) survey found that about 20 percent of drivers between the ages of 18-20, and nearly 30 percent of drivers between the ages of 21-34 said that texting makes no difference to their driving performance. The survey also found that at least half of all drivers say talking on a phone makes no difference to their driving performance.

"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."

Distracted Driving Awareness Month is led nationally by the NSC. According to the organization, more than 700 injury crashes involve distracted driving on an average day, and the economic toll of all motor vehicle crashes in the U.S. annually exceeds \$400 billion. Additionally, road construction worker deaths are on the rise as a result of being struck by vehicles or mobile equipment on highways, streets and bridges.

By agreeing to “Just Drive” with the NSC’s safety pledge, 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://cloud.safe.nsc.org/ddam-pledge>.

For more information about the Board of Commissioners, visit www.oakgov.com/boc or call 248-858-0100.

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