



Distracted Driving is Dangerous
A Message from Sheriff Al Lamberti
February 2011

Dear Residents and Business Owners:

There is no doubt that the improvement of technology in today's society has greatly benefited law enforcement and our society as a whole. However, improvements in technology have led to a new threat on our roadways – distracted driving.

Dialing numbers on cell phones or typing text messages requires attention that should be paid to the task of driving.

There are three main types of distraction: visual (taking your eyes off the road), manual (taking your hands off the wheel) and cognitive (taking your mind off what you are doing). While all distractions can endanger drivers' and fellow motorists' safety, texting while driving is the most alarming because it involves all three types of distraction. Shockingly, statistics show that texting while driving is just as dangerous as operating a motor vehicle after four alcoholic beverages. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), it is estimated that nearly 6,000 people were killed on our nation's roadways last year and more than 440,000 were injured as a result of distracted driving.

These statistics are staggering and in response the Broward Sheriff's Office, State Representatives, the Florida Sheriffs Association and local business leaders are working together to support an initiative before the Florida Legislature to institute a law that prohibits the operation of a motor vehicle while using a wireless communications device. The law, also known as the "Florida Ban on Texting while Driving Law", will improve roadway safety for motor vehicle operators, passengers, bicyclists, pedestrians and all other roadway users. It will also provide law enforcement with the tools necessary to enforce and curb this disturbing roadway hazard. To date, 36 states have enacted legislation banning the use of wireless communication devices while driving – I am hopeful that the great State of Florida will be the 37th!

The Broward Sheriff's Office has also launched a large-scale public safety campaign to remind motorists of the dangers of texting while driving. Through our 30-second public safety message featured on local cable channels, our STOP texting magnets distributed throughout the community, and our prevention messages posted on busses rolling across Broward County, we are getting the word out that this dangerous trend must come to an end.

It is clear that the dangers of texting while driving are serious. A life is more precious than taking a call or responding to a text message. It is imperative that we put the safety of others above our own need to access technology.

The men and women of the Broward Sheriff's Office are committed to keeping you and your family safe. If you find yourself reaching for your cell phone while driving, take a second to think about the dangers you are putting yourself and others in before you pick up the phone. Ask yourself, is it really worth it?

Stay safe!

-- Sheriff Al Lamberti