



NEWS RELEASE

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FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL PARTNERS WITH *STAY ALIVE ... JUST DRIVE!* TO PUT THE BRAKES ON DISTRACTED DRIVING

~ Patrol aims to save lives by focusing on safe driving practices ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - The Florida Highway Patrol next week will partner with *Stay Alive...Just Drive!*, a safe driving program based in Lee County, to promote safe driving practices, with a primary focus on eliminating distractions.

“When a driver takes the wheel, his/her primary responsibility is to operate the vehicle safely,” said FHP Director, Colonel John Czernis. “With all of the technology available to us today, it is easy to be tempted to make a quick phone call or to send a quick text to a friend, but driving requires the operator’s full attention and focus. Taking your eyes off the road for a moment to change a CD, dial a phone number or text a message can be disastrous.”

To make drivers more aware of the hazards that distracted driving presents and to help improve poor driving behavior, troopers will distribute brochures during traffic stops and at checkpoints. In addition to these education and enforcement efforts, the Florida Highway Patrol understands how effective it can be to work together with community groups, which is why the Patrol is working with *Stay Alive...Just Drive!*, to widen the reach of the important message. The organization has developed an educational campaign about distracted driving in southwest Florida that includes billboards and public service announcements. For details on the organization, visit www.sajd.org.

“We believe it is imperative that motorists take driving seriously and remember to keep their eyes on the road and their hands upon the wheel,” said Executive Director of *Stay Alive... Just Drive!*, Jay Anderson. “Think and pull over if you are going to do anything but drive when you are behind the wheel. Remember, don’t let distracted driving become your nightmare, Stay Alert, Stay Focused, Stay Alive ...Just Drive!”

Some tips that drivers should keep in mind include:

- Should you need to talk on your cell phone or text, STOP! Get safely off the road so you can dedicate yourself to the conversation without creating a driving hazard.
- Limit distractions in your car. Taking your eyes off the road to operate your radio can be disastrous.

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FHP ENCOURAGES DRIVERS TO MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS (*Continued*)

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- Read the paper at home. Many people try to read while they drive to save time. Remember, if your eyes are on the paper, they are off the road.
- Scan the roadway well ahead of you. You will be surprised at what you see when you look past the car in front of you.

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles provides highway safety and security through excellence in service, education and enforcement. The Department is leading the way to a safer Florida through the efficient and professional execution of its core mission: the issuance of driver licenses, vehicle tags and titles and operation of the Florida Highway Patrol. To learn more about DHSMV and the services offered, visit www.flhsmv.gov.

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