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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) is dedicated to educating New Jersey residents about the importance of public workers' safety during "Distracted Driving Awareness Month," aimed at promoting public awareness of attentive driving and observed nationwide in April. NJDOL strongly supports this initiative to help protect public workers including construction workers, crossing guards, emergency personnel, law enforcement, road maintenance crews, and traffic management personnel, who keep the state's roadways safe. This effort follows suit with Governor Murphy's proclamation.

NJDOL's Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) is spearheading the NJDOL public awareness campaign to help to reduce accidents that affect traffic-related workers as well as drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and outdoor enthusiasts.

"Road safety is a shared responsibility," **said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**. "Drivers must remain alert and focused every time they hit the road. Eliminating driving distractions can help to protect the lives of our public workers, who work tirelessly to maintain roadway safety for everyone who travels New Jersey's roads and highways."

NJDOL's PEOSH plays a crucial role in setting and enforcing safety standards for New Jersey public employees to promote safer work environments, particularly for those maintaining the state's highways and road systems.

"Distracted driving puts the lives of our public workers at risk while they're out there making our roadways safer," **New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner and Chair of the Target Zero Commission Fran O'Connor said**. "It's our responsibility to create a culture of safety where distracted driving is no longer tolerated. Everyone deserves to go home to their loved ones at the end of the day."

In January, Governor Phil Murphy [signed legislation](#) establishing the Target Zero Commission, tasked with developing strategies to eliminate all traffic deaths and serious injuries in New Jersey by 2040. The commission will be pivotal in shaping policies that prioritize the safety and mobility of all New Jersey residents.

State law advises drivers to avoid using their phones by keeping them out of reach and utilizing hands-free options if necessary. Texting or making phone calls while driving increases the risk of accidents. Drivers should stay focused on the road and minimize distractions, such as eating or adjusting the radio. Also, maintaining a safe following distance is advised because it allows drivers time to react to sudden stops or emergencies.

"Combining public awareness campaigns like this with increased enforcement efforts against distracted driving help ensure that drivers keep their attention on the road and off their phones," **said Attorney General Platkin**. "Staying focused behind the wheel from the moment you step into your car is crucial in preventing a possible tragedy. Working together, we can help make roadways across New Jersey safer."

Last week, the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General and the Division of Highway Traffic Safety (HTS) launched a high visibility enforcement effort to reduce distracted driving, known as "Put the Phone Away or Pay," during the month of April. This campaign will provide funding for law enforcement agencies throughout the state to bolster enforcement of laws prohibiting texting and other distractions while driving.

"Every second behind the wheel demands a driver's full attention," **said Michael J. Rizol, Jr., Director of the Division of Highway Traffic Safety**. "During National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, HTS remains unwavering in its dedication to educating drivers about the consequences of distracted driving and is fully committed to equipping our law enforcement partners with the essential resources to swiftly address and remove distracted drivers from our roads."

In addition, HTS also launched a public awareness campaign to educate drivers about the dangers and consequences of distracted driving.

"To ensure the safety of New Jersey's roads and protect those who work tirelessly to keep them safe, motorists must remain vigilant," **said Latrecia Littles-Floyd, Acting Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission**. "We urge drivers to use extra caution around workers, pedestrians, cyclists, and stationary vehicles, giving them plenty of space and taking special care when passing. At the end of the day, what's most important is that everyone is able to get home safe."

This effort follows [Crossing Guard Safety Month](#), which NJDOL dedicated to improving safety and protections for crossing guards by issuing a statewide safety alert to crossing guards, schools, school districts, state police, and municipalities. The campaign aimed to improve community safety by bolstering safety measures, training, and protections for crossing guards; encouraging safe driving, especially in school zones; and

urging drivers to slow down to protect children and pedestrians.

The "Distracted Driving Awareness Month" initiative also includes boosting public awareness of the "[Move Over Law](#)," which requires drivers to make room for emergency vehicles, tow trucks, and any vehicles stopped with flashing lights. This simple act of compliance can significantly reduce the risk of accidents involving roadside workers and first responders.

In 2024, [New Jersey saw a 14 percent increase in traffic deaths](#), marking a 30-year high for pedestrian fatalities, according to NJ.com. New Jersey State Police data reported 688 traffic-related deaths from 651 crashes, with 82 more fatalities than in 2023.

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