

News Release



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Ohio Department of Public Safety and AT&T Encourage Newly Licensed Drivers to Take the Pledge to Never Text and Drive

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Sept. 10, 2014) — Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) Director John Born joined AT&T today to highlight the dangers of texting and driving. During the month of September, which is Safe Driving Awareness Month, all Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) locations across the state will provide a palm card to newly-licensed drivers, encouraging them to take the pledge and commit to never text and drive.

“Distracted driving is an epidemic on our roadways, and we need people all across Ohio to take action in their communities to help put a stop to it,” said Director Born.

AT&T first launched the *It Can Wait*[®] campaign in 2010 to educate the public about the dangers of texting while driving and encourage consumers to take the pledge to never text and drive. Information about the issue can be found at www.ItCanWait.com. Ohioans can take the pledge at the website or can dial the short code “464329” on their mobile device, then text “ICWOH” to take the pledge.

“This is the first time the campaign has partnered with state officials to reach newly licensed drivers statewide, at that one moment when they may be most receptive to the message,” said AT&T Ohio President Adam Grzybicki. “We’re challenging all drivers, especially our teens, to take the pledge to never text and drive and make it a lifelong commitment.”

The *It Can Wait*[®] movement is making a difference. Awareness of the dangers of texting and driving has reached 97 percent or higher for every audience AT&T has polled. The campaign has inspired more than 5 million personal commitments to never text and drive. The [“From One Second to the Next”](#) documentary has also received millions of views since its Hollywood premiere last year.

“Earlier this year I sponsored Senate Bill 294 which designates September as ‘Safe Driving Awareness Month’ in Ohio. Partnerships like this one between the Ohio Department of Public Safety and AT&T are absolutely crucial to

getting this message out to drivers,” said State Senator Jim Hughes. “We all must work together to remind all drivers that distractions in the car and driving don’t mix.”

More than 200,000 crashes a year involve drivers who are texting, according to the National Safety Council¹. The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute has found that drivers who send text messages while driving are much more likely to be in a crash.

Teens are particularly at risk. While 97% of teens say they know texting while driving is dangerous, 75% say the practice is still “common” among their friends, according to an AT&T survey².

In Ohio, it is illegal for drivers under age 18 to write, send, or read text-based messages or even talk on the phone while driving due to a texting ban which took effect in March 2013. The penalty is a \$150 fine and a 60-day license suspension, and repeat offenders could face a \$300 fine and a 1-year license suspension. For adults the texting ban is a secondary offense.

For more information on the *It Can Wait*[®] campaign, please visit: ItCanWait.com.

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¹ National Safety Council www.nsc.org

² Survey conducted by Beck Research on behalf of AT&T http://www.att.com/Common/about_us/txtng_driving/att_teen_survey_executive.pdf

About ODPS

Through safety, service and protection, ODPS is dedicated to the mission of saving lives, reducing injuries and economic loss, administering Ohio’s motor vehicle laws, and regulating driver licensing and registration through its seven divisions: the Ohio State Highway Patrol; Bureau of Motor Vehicles; Homeland Security; Emergency Management Agency; Emergency Medical Services; Investigative Unit; and Office of Criminal Justice Services.

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Reliability claim based on data transfer completion rates on nationwide 4G LTE networks. 4G LTE availability varies.