



MEDIA RELEASE

Department of Public Safety

Ohio Department of Public Safety • Thomas P. Charles, Director
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OHIO TO RECOGNIZE NATIONAL TEEN DRIVER SAFETY WEEK

Department Works to Raise Awareness and Educate Partners about the Importance of Teen Driver Safety

(COLUMBUS) – Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15 to 20-year-olds in the United States. Ohio is recognizing National Teen Driver Safety Week October 16-22 to educate both parents and teens alike about the important issue of teen driver safety.

“Young people are America’s future,” said Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) Director Tom Charles. “ODPS has been working with partners around the state, including parents, law enforcement, other safety advocates and teens themselves to develop and promote safe teen driving behaviors and messages.”

Data from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that in 2009 more than 3,214 teens ages 15 to 19 died in vehicle crashes of all types. And 594 (18%) of those fatal crashes involved distracted driving. All told, 3,883 teen drivers ages 15 to 19 were involved in fatal crashes in 2009, and 15 percent were distracted at the time of the crash.

The heartbreaking results of distracted driving are attributed to many causes—from texting and talking on a cell phone to eating or playing with a radio, CD player, or MP3 device.

“Teenagers are constantly looking for respect, and want people to trust them,” said Colonel John Born, superintendent of the Ohio State Highway Patrol. “So our message for teens is: You want people to trust you? Go the speed limit. Wear your safety belt. Keep your eyes on the road. Make the decision to be a safe driver.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.ocjs.ohio.gov>, <http://statepatrol.ohio.gov> or <http://www.distraction.gov>.

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ODPS works to reduce deaths and injuries and improve the quality of life for Ohioans through the coordinated efforts of its Divisions, which include the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Division of Emergency Medical Services and the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS). The Ohio State Highway Patrol enforces traffic laws and OCJS funds the efforts of OVI Task Forces and other grants for law enforcement to combat impaired and unsafe driving and increase seat belt use. OCJS also promotes educational programs, coalition-building efforts and campaigns for highway safety.