



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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Contact: Jill Drury, Communications Manager

(937) 433-9969

**MTPD to crack down on distracted driving**

*Put the Phone Away or Pay campaign in April*

The Miami Township Police Department is partnering with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to keep drivers safe on area roadways. The MTPD will focus on distracted driving violations throughout the month of April.

The *Put the Phone Away or Pay* campaign is funded through a NHTSA Ohio Safety Grant awarded to the department for 2026. It allows officers to focus more attention on enforcement of distracted driving laws. According to NHTSA, there were approximately 3,275 people killed nationwide in 2023.

"It only takes a distracted driver a couple of seconds while glancing at their cell phone to cause a serious crash," Sgt. Crystal Rankins, Miami Township Police Department, said.

"They put themselves and others at risk. It is illegal in Ohio to text and drive, so our officers will be issuing tickets if they stop you."

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The NHTSA and MTPD offer this advice to avoid distracted driving:

- If you are expecting a text message or need to send one that cannot wait, pull over and park your car in a safe location before using your device.
- Ask your passenger to be your “designated texter.” Allow them to access your phone to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.
- Cell phone use is habit-forming. Activate your phone’s “Do Not Disturb” feature, silence notifications, or put your phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of your vehicle until you arrive at your destination.

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