

## U.S. Department of Transportation Kicks Off Annual U Drive. U Text. U Pay. Campaign

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The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) today announced it is supporting National Distracted Driving Awareness Week with a \$5 million public awareness advertising campaign. During NHTSA's *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* high-visibility campaign, law enforcement officers nationwide will be looking for drivers texting or using their phones behind the wheel.

"Distracted driving can cause accidents and worse – this educational campaign reminds drivers to focus on the road and drive safely," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

Distracted driving can be a fatal mistake. In 2018, 2,841 people were killed and 400,000 were injured in crashes involving distracted drivers. Please click [here](#) for NHTSA's 2018 *Distracted Driving Traffic Safety Facts*.

"Taking your eyes off the road for a moment is all it takes to cause a crash. No call or text is worth a life," NHTSA Deputy Administrator James Owens said. "When you're behind the wheel, stay focused on the road in front of you – not your phone. And know that no vehicles on the market today are capable of driving themselves — you're in charge and responsible for safely operating your vehicle even if it is equipped with the most advanced driver assistance features."

The *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* high-visibility enforcement campaign, now in its seventh year, is supported by a \$5 million national media buy. New ads in both English and Spanish will air on television, radio, and digital platforms targeting the high-risk driver category, ages 18 to 34.

To prevent tragedies due to distracted driving, everyone should:

- Turn off electronic devices and put them out of reach before starting to drive.
- Be good role models for young drivers and set a good example. Talk with your teens about responsible driving.
- Speak up when a driver uses an electronic device behind the wheel. Offer to make the call for the driver, so his or her full attention stays on the road.
- Always wear your seat belt. Seat belts are your best defense against unsafe drivers.
- Be alert for pedestrians and cyclists, especially those who may themselves be distracted.

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