

Placer County cracking down on drivers using cell phones

Placer County sheriff's deputies are beefing up enforcement of cell phone laws Feb. 25-March 8.

The enforcement is part of a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to eliminate motorists' hand-held cell phone use and texting. The effort is a special federally funded pilot program using the region to test tactics that may be employed nationally in the future.



California's distracted driving law bans all drivers from using hand-held devices and texting while operating a motor vehicle. However, in 2011, the Department of Motor Vehicles reported 460,487 handheld cell phone convictions, up from 361,260 in 2010.

Distracted drivers in Placer County talking on a hand-held cell phone or texting will receive a first-time ticket costing a minimum of \$159, with a second offense costing \$279. But the goal of the special enforcement operation is not to issue tickets, but to raise awareness of the dangers of distracted driving.

- Turn off your phone and/or put it out of reach. Include in your outgoing message that you can't answer while you are driving.
- Don't call or text anyone at a time when you think they may be driving.