

Milledgeville Police Department

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NEWS RELEASE

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Division: Specialized Patrol

MPD observes National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

April is nationally recognized as Distracted Driving Awareness Month—a time when law enforcement and traffic agencies across the country educate the public on the dangers of distracted driving.

Started by The National Safety Council (NSC), Distracted Driving Awareness Month aims to draw attention to this ongoing problem.

“We live in a time when technology gives us the ability to do more than just make phone calls. We are able to update social media statuses, look up information on the internet and dictate texts or emails—all while driving, but we must remember that all of the actions are proven to increase the risk of being involved in an accident,” said Lt. Reenae Gray of MPD’s Specialized Patrol Unit (SPU).

The latest statistics from NSC show motor vehicle fatalities are up 6% from 2015.

“Every time someone takes their eyes off the road - even for just a few seconds - they put their lives and the lives of others in danger,” said Gray.

Traffic data compiled by traffic enforcement officers in MPD’s Specialized Patrol Unit indicates that distracted driving and following too closely have been the top contributing factors in the majority of accidents and fatalities in the city.

“Most people take every extra precaution available when it comes to the use of a firearm, but no one stops to consider that their vehicle is a dangerous weapon as well. The 3-4 thousand pound vehicle that motorists operate can become extremely dangerous when a driver is distracted. It’s important for motorists to keep their eyes and mind on the roadway in order to arrive to your destination safely,” said Officer David Descoteaux.

Descoteaux serves as one of Specialized Patrol’s traffic enforcement officers.

Milledgeville police officers along with the SPU team will be on local college campuses and various road locations in Milledgeville throughout the month, distributing educational material on the consequences of distracted driving and texting while driving.

The NSC encourages all drivers to take a pledge to be an attentive driver through its *Just Drive* pledge initiative.

I pledge to Just Drive for my own safety and for others with whom I share the roads. I choose to not drive distracted in any way – I will not:

- *Have a phone conversation – handheld, hands-free, or via Bluetooth*
- *Text or send Snapchats*
- *Use voice-to-text features in my vehicle's dashboard system*
- *Update Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo, Vine or other social media*
- *Check or send emails*
- *Take selfies or film videos*
- *Input destinations into GPS (while the vehicle is in motion)*
- *Call or message someone else when I know they are driving*

To learn more about the dangers of distracted driving and to take the pledge to drive phone free, visit the National Safety Council's website.

Dates of campus visits to Georgia College, Georgia Military College and Central Georgia Technical College by SPU officers will be announced at a later time.

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