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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **News Release**

#### ***April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month Texting and Driving will cost you: First Ticket Minimum \$159***

The Beverly Hills Police Department is trying to get the word out to drivers: **“Hang up and Drive.”**

“Distracted driving is extremely dangerous and the public appears to be taking it for granted; and although no-one intends to get into a crash, that is often the result,” says Lieutenant Mark Rosen of the BHPD Traffic Bureau. Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into a serious collision causing injury to themselves or others. And younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction related fatal crashes.

Joining in a statewide campaign to get distracted drivers off the road, Police Chief David Snowden announced a zero tolerance policy for distracted driving. This includes talking on the cellular phone, texting while operating your vehicle or reading your emails while driving.

“Hands free means hands free,” says Lieutenant Rosen. “If you are holding your phone and using it as a speaker phone you are still in violation of the law.” Is that text or message really worth a \$159 ticket – or worse, a crash, injury or death?

During the month of April, the Beverly Hills Police Department will be conducting a minimum of eight special enforcement operations targeting distracted drivers. These enforcement operations promoted by the California Office of Traffic Safety will coincide with similar operations by police and sheriff’s departments across the state as well as the California Highway Patrol.

There are simple measures that drivers can take to minimize distractions in the vehicle:

- Turn your phone off or put it out of reach before starting the car
- Alert callers you are unable to take calls when driving by changing your voicemail message
- Make it a point not to call or text anyone you know may be driving, such as during their commute time, especially parents calling teen drivers.
- If you do need to make an important call or respond to a text, pull over to a safe and legal place to park.

For additional information please contact the Beverly Hills Police Department Traffic Bureau at (310) 285-2190.

Or to schedule an interview regarding Distracted Driving and programs in California please contact Chris Cochran, California Office of Traffic Safety at (916) 509-3063 or via email at [ccochran@ots.ca.gov](mailto:ccochran@ots.ca.gov)