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## **KDOT, law enforcement remind drivers: *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.***

**TOPEKA** – The Kansas Department of Transportation and law enforcement agencies across the state are teaming up in support of the national the *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* campaign to bring attention to and to enforce texting and distracted-driving laws.

In conjunction with heightened distracted-driving law enforcement from April 3-9, KDOT will roll out a statewide marketing initiative around the *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* campaign as promoted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

“We’ve seen in Kansas how distracted driving can have catastrophic consequences,” said Acting Secretary of Transportation Calvin Reed. “Drivers need to keep focused on the road and remain attentive at all times. Put your phone down and just drive.”

Crash numbers indicate many drivers in Kansas are guilty when it comes to distracted driving. KDOT stats from 2021 show 534 crashes occurred by mobile phone distractions alone. There were 148 crashes caused by drivers paying attention to electronic devices like DVD players, stereos and GPS units. Another 1,131 crashes were the result of distractions such as applying makeup, reading, eating, etc.

KDOT’s *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* safety messaging will primarily target drivers ages 18-34. NHTSA research shows this age group represents the most distracted drivers, often because of cell phone use. NHTSA reports more than 32,000 people died in distraction-affected crashes from 2011 to 2020. In 2020, 3,142 deaths were linked to driver distraction, representing 8% of all motor-vehicle crash fatalities.

“Set a good example, put your phone away when you get behind the wheel,” said Secretary Reed. “And if you are riding with someone who is texting and driving, don’t hesitate to speak up.”

KDOT and NHTSA encourages drivers to take away the temptation to be on their phones. Activate the phone’s “Do Not Disturb” feature or put the phone in the glove box or back seat. Designate passengers to send or respond to calls and messages.

Remember the *U Drive. U Text. U Pay* safety campaign. For more information, visit [www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/distracted-driving](http://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/distracted-driving).

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700 SW Harrison St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754, or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired – 711.