

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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Governor

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Help Prevent Distracted Driving Paint Your Thumbnail Red

PASCO - In an effort to raise awareness of risks associated with texting and driving, local officials are asking residents to paint their texting thumbnails red. The multi-agency campaign will focus messages on texting and driving during the month of October.

"Community health is impacted by individual behaviors such as unhealthy eating and lack of physical activity. Added to these poor choices is texting and driving," said Mike Napier, County Health Officer. "I will paint my thumbnail red to help create an awareness of unsafe driving behaviors."

The inspiration behind the Red Thumb Campaign came from Steve Babcock who saw his daughter tie a piece of yarn on her finger to remember something for school. The red thumbnail is a reminder to not text and drive.

On Friday, October 3rd groups came together in support of the campaign. The emergency room at Medical Center of Trinity was the back drop for a multi-agency press conference. Joining the Florida Department of Health in Pasco County (DOH-Pasco) were representatives from Pasco County Sheriff's Office, Pasco County Public Safety, Mitchell High SADD club and Medical Center of Trinity. During the campaign, messages will be communicated with posters, videos, social media and conversations.

The National Occupant Protection Use Survey conducted by the National Center for Statistics and Analysis of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that 421,000 people were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver in 2012. At any given daylight moment across America, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving, a number that has held steady since 2010.

According to NHTSA, 71% of teens and young people say they have composed/sent short message service (SMS) messages while driving and 78% of teens and young adults say they have read an SMS message while driving.

Tips to help stop texting and driving from <http://www.stoptextsstopwrecks.org/#tips> include:

- Out of sight, out of mind. When you're in the car, put your phone where you can't get it. A place where you won't even be tempted to look for it. No phone. No texting.
- Silence is golden. Turn those notifications off. The less you hear your phone, the less tempted you'll be to respond while you're driving.
- Find your app. An app can help you stop texting and driving. Download your fave and forget about it in the car.
- Designate a texter. Borrow thumbs from a friend. Or lend yours to a friend. Passengers get the privilege of texting while in motion.

For more information about the Red Thumb Campaign visit www.redthumbreminder.com. For additional information on how to avoid texting while driving visit www.distraction.gov or stoptextsstopwrecks.org.

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