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La Porte Police Warn Motorists about Texting While Driving

If you use a cell phone, chances are you're aware of "text messaging"—brief typed messages sent or received on mobile phones or other hand-held devices. Texting is on the rise with over 110 billion text messages being sent each year. While the act of texting is not, in and of itself, hazardous, sending or receiving texts becomes dangerous when the person engaged in the activity is driving. This is supported by countless studies which have scientifically proven that texting significantly impairs driving abilities, delays reaction time, and increases the risk of becoming involved in a motor vehicle accident.

It is for these reasons that the La Porte Police Department is asking residents to refrain from texting or using hand-held devices while they are driving. If you avoid text messaging in your car, you substantially reduce the chances of becoming involved in a crash; avoiding injury and potentially saving a life.

While most can agree on the dangers surrounding the use of hand-held devices while driving, texting while driving is of particular concern as it completely removes a driver's attention from the roadway. However, there remains the assumption that the act is an anomaly limited to teen drivers. Yet studies show that adults are actually more likely to text while driving. According to the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, adults are substantially more likely to text or talk on a cell phone while driving than teenagers and have also been found to exceed teenage texting by as much as 13 %. The Pew survey revealed that 74% of adults that own cell phones either talk or text while driving, while just over half (52%) of teens with phones talk or text while behind the wheel.

Of course, the dangers associated with texting are not limited to the possibility of motorists striking other vehicles. The study found that 17% of adults claim to have physically run into another person or object while talking or texting on a cell phone. What's more, another comprehensive national study, conducted by the Virginia Tech Transportation Unit, revealed that those who text while driving are 23 times more likely to have a crash than non-distracted drivers. Researchers involved with the study also found that activities responsible for taking a driver's eyes off the roadway, like dialing a phone or texting, were much more likely to cause a crash than just merely talking on a cell phone.

Technologies will certainly continue to advance and, absent of specific legal restrictions, motorists will likely continue to make use of such hand-held devices. However, the La Porte Police Department encourages motorists to consider the safe alternative and simply pull over and utilize one of the many parking lots or designated roadside areas if you plan to engage in texting, or any other activity that is likely to remove your attention from the roadway. Finally, should you ever observe a serious act of unsafe driving, please contact the La Porte Police Department at 281-471-2141 or, if located in another city, alert the local police agency in the area.