



# VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## Get Off Your Apps: April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Visalia, Calif. – April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and the Visalia Police Department will be actively looking for drivers throughout the month who are in violation of the state's hands-free cell phone law.

"Holding your phone and using it while driving is not only dangerous, but also illegal," Sergeant Art Alvarez said. "Before starting the car, silence your phone or put it in the glove box, trunk, or back seat. Anywhere you can't reach."

According to the [2022 California Statewide Public Opinion Survey](#), nearly 72% of drivers surveyed said that distracted driving because of texting was their biggest safety concern. In 2021, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) issued nearly 56,000 citations for distracted driving.

Under current law, drivers are not allowed to hold a phone or electronic communications device while operating a vehicle. This includes talking, texting, or using an app. Using a handheld cell phone while driving is punishable by a fine. Violating the hands-free law for a second time within 36 months of a prior conviction for the same offense will result in a point being added to a driver's record.

If you have an important phone call, text, email, or in a situation with other distractions, pull over to a safe parking spot. Other distractions can be eating, grooming, reaching for something that fell on the floor, putting on or taking off clothing, talking with passengers, or children in the back seat.

Funding for distracted driving enforcement is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

