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King County Deploys Extra Patrols to Monitor Distracted Driving for Sixth Year

Survey provides update on King County motorists' opinions on distracted driving behaviors

SEATTLE (August 3, 2023) – Law enforcement agencies in King County are deploying High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) patrols from August 6 to August 12 to monitor drivers violating Washington's Driving Under the Influence of Electronics (E-DUI) law as part of the King County Target Zero Task Force's efforts to minimize distracted driving. This is the sixth year HVE patrols have been deployed since Governor Jay Inslee signed the E-DUI law into effect.

The King County Target Zero Task Force, in partnership with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, continues to prioritize distracted driving to ensure safe roads. The E-DUI law states drivers may not hold cell phones or watch videos while they are driving, stopped in traffic or at a stop light. Hands-free use is limited to a single touch device. The first violation results in an E-DUI ticket that costs drivers \$136. If the driver incurs a second ticket within five years, the fine increases to \$234.

"King County is one of the most populated counties in the country, which means there is a higher likelihood for distracted drivers to be on the road," says Sgt. Leo Ramos, Law Enforcement Liaison for the King County Target Zero Task Force. "Choosing to drive while distracted driving is a choice and a dangerous behavior that can increase the probability of vehicle fatalities and injuries. We're asking everyone to think about their fellow drivers and make the decision to stay focused on the road."

The King County Target Zero Task Force conducted a survey of over 1,000 King County drivers to better understand how they perceive the risks and dangers of distracted driving and adhere to the E-DUI law. The results found that 93% of drivers find it unacceptable to type a text or email while driving and 83% find it a personal threat when others talk on their phone while driving. A vast majority (over 80%) also reported they were unlikely to use a hand-held device to talk or text while driving over the next 30 days.

"The vast majority of people in Washington choose to do the right thing when they're driving, and we want to thank them for their continued efforts to keep our roads safe," says Sara Wood, Target Zero Manager, South King County. "The number one thing motorists can do to help is simply putting their phone away while driving and encouraging others to do the same. Everyone is safer when drivers stay focused on the road."

This marks the sixth year that the King County Target Zero Task Force has conducted a survey of adults in King County regarding behaviors, acceptance, perceived threat, and intention regarding distracted driving. During this time, knowledge of Washington's E-DUI has generally improved, but survey data also reveals persistent issues relating to cell phone use behaviors and attitudes about cell phone use while driving. To read a full report from the first five years of the survey, please click [here](#).

Agencies participating in the extra patrols include the Bellevue, Black Diamond, Burien, Covington, Des Moines, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kenmore, Kent, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, Maple Valley, Mercer Island, Newcastle, Normandy Park, Redmond, Renton, Sammamish, SeaTac, and Shoreline police departments.

Drivers can visit the Washington Traffic Safety Commission's [website](#) to learn all the dos and don'ts of the E-DUI law.

ABOUT KING COUNTY TARGET ZERO TASK FORCE

Extra patrols are partially funded by the Washington Traffic Safety Commission with the coordination of the King County Target Zero Task Force. The Task Force brings together representatives from law enforcement, public health, health and human services, transportation and community organizations to coordinate traffic safety campaigns throughout King County.

The WTSC and participating law enforcement agencies condemn profiling. Trained and commissioned law enforcement officers will be conducting these patrols enforcing traffic violations as defined by Washington State laws.

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