



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
TRANSPORTATION CABINET
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kentucky Motorists Encouraged To Buckle Up, Put Phone Down
April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 19, 2024) – In honor of National Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April, Kentucky is driving home a life-saving message for all motorists: Buckle up and put the phone down.

“Safety is a top priority of this administration. So, we’re encouraging all Kentuckians to protect themselves by buckling up and putting the phone down when entering a vehicle,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “One life lost on Kentucky roadways due to distracted driving is too many. So, we need to do everything we can to protect ourselves and others on the road when we’re driving.”

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet’s (KYTC) Office of Highway Safety (KOHS) Buckle Up/Phone Down campaign (bupdky.com) features videos, radio spots, social media, digital advertising and a downloadable ringtone. New this year are testimonials by two Kentucky families, the Coltharp family from Paducah and the Miller family from Owensboro. Both families are living with the consequences of a loved one’s involvement in a vehicle crash.

“It’s always about people, not numbers, when we talk about crashes on Kentucky roads,” said KYTC Secretary Jim Gray. “That’s why we’re so thankful for these brave Kentuckians who have shared their gripping stories with the hope of saving even one life from the devastating impacts of distracted driving.”

View their stories here: <https://kentuckyhighwaysafety.com/buckle-up-phone-down#videos>

“Our goal is for all road users to reach their destination safely – every trip, every time,” said Secretary Gray. “Our hope is that these testimonies will encourage motorists to make safe choices on our roadways, and as a result, prevent other families from experiencing these types of tragedies.”

Over the past decade, distracted driving has become one of the leading causes of vehicle crashes on our nation’s roads. According to KOHS, each year in Kentucky, distracted driving results in more than 50,000 crashes, more than 13,000 injuries and approximately 200 deaths.

According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](https://www.nhtsa.gov), while anything that takes a driver’s eyes off the road, hands off the wheel or mind off the task of driving is a hazard, texting

and using a phone while driving is especially risky because it combines all three types of distraction – visual, manual and cognitive.

“When you get behind the wheel, putting away your phone should be as automatic as putting on your seat belt,” said Secretary Gray. “Unfortunately, many motorists do not do either, which is why we are promoting the Buckle Up/Phone Down message.”

According to the [NHTSA](#), wearing a seat belt gives motorists the best chance of preventing injury or death if involved in a crash. Properly fastened seat belts contact the strongest parts of the body, such as the chest, hips and shoulders. A seat belt spreads the force of a crash over a wide area of the body, putting less stress on any one part, and allows the body to slow down with the crash, extending the time when the crash forces are felt by the occupant.

“Sometimes even the most attentive drivers are involved in a crash caused by other drivers,” said Secretary Gray. “Wearing a seat belt is your best defense against distracted drivers.”

According to KOHS, each year in Kentucky, more than half of those killed in motor vehicles are not wearing a seat belt.

Visit bupdky.com to view the Buckle Up/Phone Down campaign.

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Editor’s note: Radio spots, ringtone and videos may be downloaded at bupdky.com

