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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month**

*Kentucky motorists are advised to buckle up and put the phone down*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 31, 2022)** – In honor of National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet’s (KYTC) Office of Highway Safety is driving home a life-saving message for all motorists – buckle up and put the phone down.

“Kentuckians can help protect themselves and all our families by buckling up every time they enter a vehicle and choosing to put down their phone,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “These basic safety practices make a considerable difference in preventing crashes and lessening the severity of injuries and the number of deaths on our roadways.”

Kentucky’s Buckle Up/Phone Down campaign features videos, radio spots, social media and digital advertising that will run throughout the month. Additionally, a Buckle Up/Phone Down ringtone was created specifically for the campaign and may be downloaded at [kyhighwaysafety.com](http://kyhighwaysafety.com).

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 15,000 injuries and approximately 200 deaths.

“Preventable deaths and injuries are the hardest ones to accept,” said KYTC Secretary Jim Gray. “These are not just numbers. These are people – mothers, fathers, sons, daughters – that either didn’t survive or their lives were seriously altered due to someone not making a safe choice when behind the wheel.”

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

“Texting while driving is illegal for all motorists, but we want people to stop because it’s the right choice, not just because it’s the law,” said Secretary Gray. “When you get behind the wheel, putting away your phone should be as automatic as putting on your seat belt. 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. “That is why wearing your seat belt is the best defense against serious injuries and death.”

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

For more information, please visit [kyhighwaysafety.com](http://kyhighwaysafety.com)

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**Ed. note:** Radio spots, ringtone and videos may be downloaded at [kyhighwaysafety.com](http://kyhighwaysafety.com)