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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Distracted driving crashes in Michigan continue to rise **DISTRACTED DRIVING AWARENESS MONTH TO PUT MOTORISTS ON ALERT**

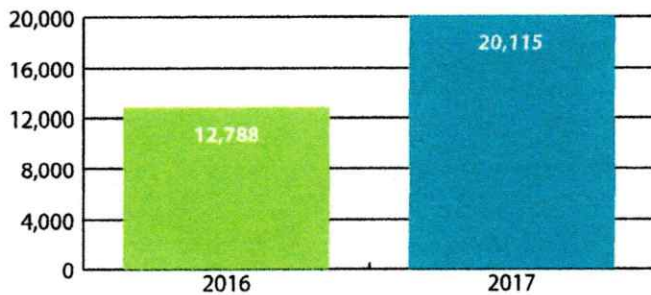
Michigan saw a 57 percent increase in distracted driving crashes and a 67 percent increase in fatalities from those crashes from 2016 to 2017, according to the Michigan State Police (MSP) Criminal Justice Information Center (CJIC). That's why law enforcement agencies around the state are participating in a nationwide distracted driving mobilization period from April 11-15, in the middle of Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

"When you are behind the wheel, keep your phone out of reach," said Michael L. Prince, OHSP director. "Studies show that texting while driving takes your attention off the road more than any other activity."

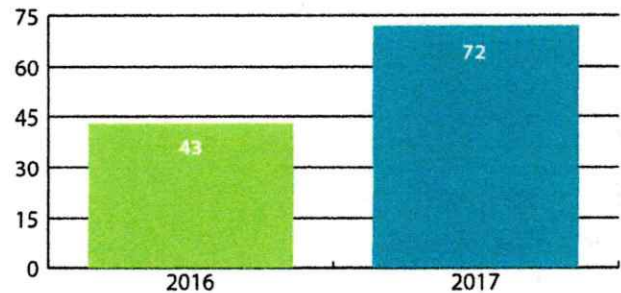
According to the MSP CJIC, there were 20,115 crashes in Michigan during 2017 involving distracted driving, resulting in 72 fatalities. In 2016, there were 12,788 distracted driving crashes resulting in 43 fatalities.

"This is a noteworthy increase in crashes and nearly 30 more fatalities. We have to do everything possible to get those numbers trending in the opposite direction," said Prince.

Distracted Driving Crashes in Michigan



Fatalities from Distracted Driving Crashes in Michigan



To help encourage drivers to remain attentive to the task of driving, the OHSP has distributed materials to every law enforcement agency across the state. On April 11, to kick off the five day mobilization period, agencies across the state will be patrolling looking for distracted drivers.

Michigan law prohibits a driver from reading, manually typing, or sending a text message while driving. Driving is defined as: operating a moving motor vehicle on a street or highway. Exceptions are in place for reporting crashes, crimes or other emergencies.