



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Mittelstadt Chief Deputy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt

Office: 920-386-4115

dschmidt@co.dodge.wi.us

Operation Phones Down

Citizens across our country, state and right here in Dodge County continue to struggle with the impacts of drivers who are paying more attention to their phones than their driving. We have seen many incidents of this while driving down the road or when investigating crashes that occur. Some of those crashes unfortunately have resulted in the loss of someone's life.

Wisconsin does have laws in place regarding distracted driving and texting while driving. They are covered under Wisconsin Statute 346.89 as follows:

346.89 Inattentive driving.

(1) No person while driving a motor vehicle may be engaged or occupied with an activity, other than driving the vehicle that interferes or reasonably appears to interfere with the person's ability to drive the vehicle safely.

(3)(a) No person may drive, as defined in s. 343.305 (1) (b), any motor vehicle while composing or sending an electronic text message or an electronic mail message.

(b) This subsection does not apply to any of the following:

1. The operator of an authorized emergency vehicle.
2. The use of any device whose primary function is transmitting and receiving emergency alert messages and messages related to the operation of the vehicle or an accessory that is integrated into the electrical system of a vehicle, including a global positioning system device.
3. An amateur radio operator who holds a valid amateur radio operator's license issued by the federal communications commission when he or she is using dedicated amateur radio 2-way radio communication equipment and observing proper amateur radio operating procedures.

The Dodge County Sheriff's Office and local police departments are not able to affect the culture change needed to make our highways safer alone. We can and do issue citations related to violations of 346.89, but the culture of driving while distracted can best be changed by you. We need you to make a conscious decision to put your phone down at all times, not just when there is a squad car around. We also need passengers of vehicles to raise concerns with drivers who don't put their phones down. Remind those drivers that you are placing your safety in their hands and they need to take that responsibility seriously.

The Dodge County Sheriff's Office will not tolerate incidents of inattentive driving and we will take

enforcement action. Please work with us and do your part to help us prevent crashes from occurring resulting from inattentive driving. Put your phone down, watch the road and drive defensively. Your life very well may depend on it.

Questions may be directed to Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt.

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