



August 8, 2013

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## **Florida Department of Transportation Launches “Put it Down” Distracted Driving Awareness Campaign**

*Various Organizations Partner to Promote Safety Message in Miami-Dade, Monroe Counties*

**Miami**—The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will host a partnership kick-off event from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 14 at the Florida Department of Transportation Marathon Operations Center to launch a campaign to inform drivers in Monroe County of the risks of distracted driving. The campaign also hopes to increase awareness of the new Florida law banning texting while driving, which goes into effect on October 1.

The campaign, which targets drivers between 16 and 24, will run from August through November, and will include extensive community outreach throughout the region. FDOT has joined forces with numerous educational institutions and other partner agencies and organizations to promote the “Put it Down” safety message.

“Texting while driving causes a driver to be physically, visually, and cognitively distracted, which is an extremely dangerous combination,” said FDOT District Six Secretary Gus Pego. “Our message is simple: next time you’re behind the wheel, just ‘Put it Down.’”

According to the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, text messaging takes a driver's eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent of driving the length of a football field at 55 miles-per-hour, blind.

The Safety Partners joining FDOT in Monroe County include the municipalities of Layton, Islamorada, Marathon, Key Colony Beach and Key West; the Islamorada, Marathon, Key West and Monroe County fire departments; Monroe County Government, Sheriff’s Department and Tax Collector; the Key West Police Department; Lower Keys Medical Center; Florida Department of Health; Baptist Health of South Florida; Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise; AAA; ATT; Florida Keys Community College and the Monroe County School District.

For more information, please visit [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov) or contact the FDOT District Six Community Traffic Safety Coordinator, Carlos Sarmiento, at (305) 470-5437 or via email at [carlos.sarmiento@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:carlos.sarmiento@dot.state.fl.us).

[www.dot.state.fl.us](http://www.dot.state.fl.us)

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