From: All State Employees with Email Super List
[ALL_STATE_EMPLOYEES@LISTSERVER.DHRM.VIRGINIA.GOV] on behalf of Governor of Virginia
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Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2009 2:36 PM
To: ALL_STATE_EMPLOYEES@LISTSERVER.DHRM.VIRGINIA.GOV
Subject: Drive Safe Virginia

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

April 29, 2009

Dear Colleague:

The Virginia Highway Safety Office at DMV reported that in 2008 preliminary data, 821 people lost their lives on the roadways of Virginia. While most of us are aware of the risk taking behaviors that cause motor vehicle crashes, such as speeding and impaired driving; few of us recognize the dangers of our distracted driving habits.

In a 2006 study conducted by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, driver inattention proved to be a leading factor in most roadway crashes. In fact, according to that study, nearly eighty percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes studied involved some form of driver inattention within three seconds prior to the crash.

Recently, I took the important step of signing into law a ban on text messaging while driving in Virginia. Experts have pointed to activities such as text messaging behind the wheel as being a top distracter. Further, I have placed into policy a ban on cell phone use while driving a state vehicle. As such, I, along with the Virginia Highway Safety Office, the Virginia State Police and DRIVE SMART Virginia, have declared April 29 as Distracted Driving Awareness Day (DDAD) in Virginia.

All Virginians should understand that our full attention and energy must be placed on the very important task of driving a motor vehicle. Take a moment to reflect on the habits you have developed behind the wheel, including reaching for items in the car, cell phone use, eating, or even being distracted by your children. My challenge to you is to reflect on these behaviors and to pledge to become a safer driver by eliminating distractions, obeying speed limits, and always bucking up. If we dedicate ourselves to adopting and maintaining safe driving behaviors while behind the wheel, we will find that our roadways in Virginia become safer for all citizens.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor