



# Distracted Driving Awareness in Virginia



# We Have a Handheld Phone Ban!

The Virginia General Assembly mandated that traffic safety organizations like DRIVE SMART Virginia shall develop and provide educational materials to the public regarding the provisions of this act prior to its effective date.

The effective date was delayed for six months in order to provide the time to deliver this education to the public.

# Strategies



- Created the **Hands-Free Virginia Advisory Council** in order to ensure that educational programming would meet the needs of all residents in a fair and inclusive way.
- Leveraged the **Virginia Partners for Safe Driving**, a group of businesses, organizations, and government entities committed to encourage safe driving behaviors to help raise awareness of the new law.
- Developed a **communications plan** based upon a variety of strategies to reach diverse audiences, including paid and organic social media, roadway signage, variable messaging signs, radio and digital PSAs, press conferences, print materials, a dedicated website and more.



**Phone Down.**

**It's The Law.**

**New Virginia Law  
Effective Statewide  
January 1, 2021**

**Partnered with the Virginia  
Highway Safety Office to create  
the campaign.**

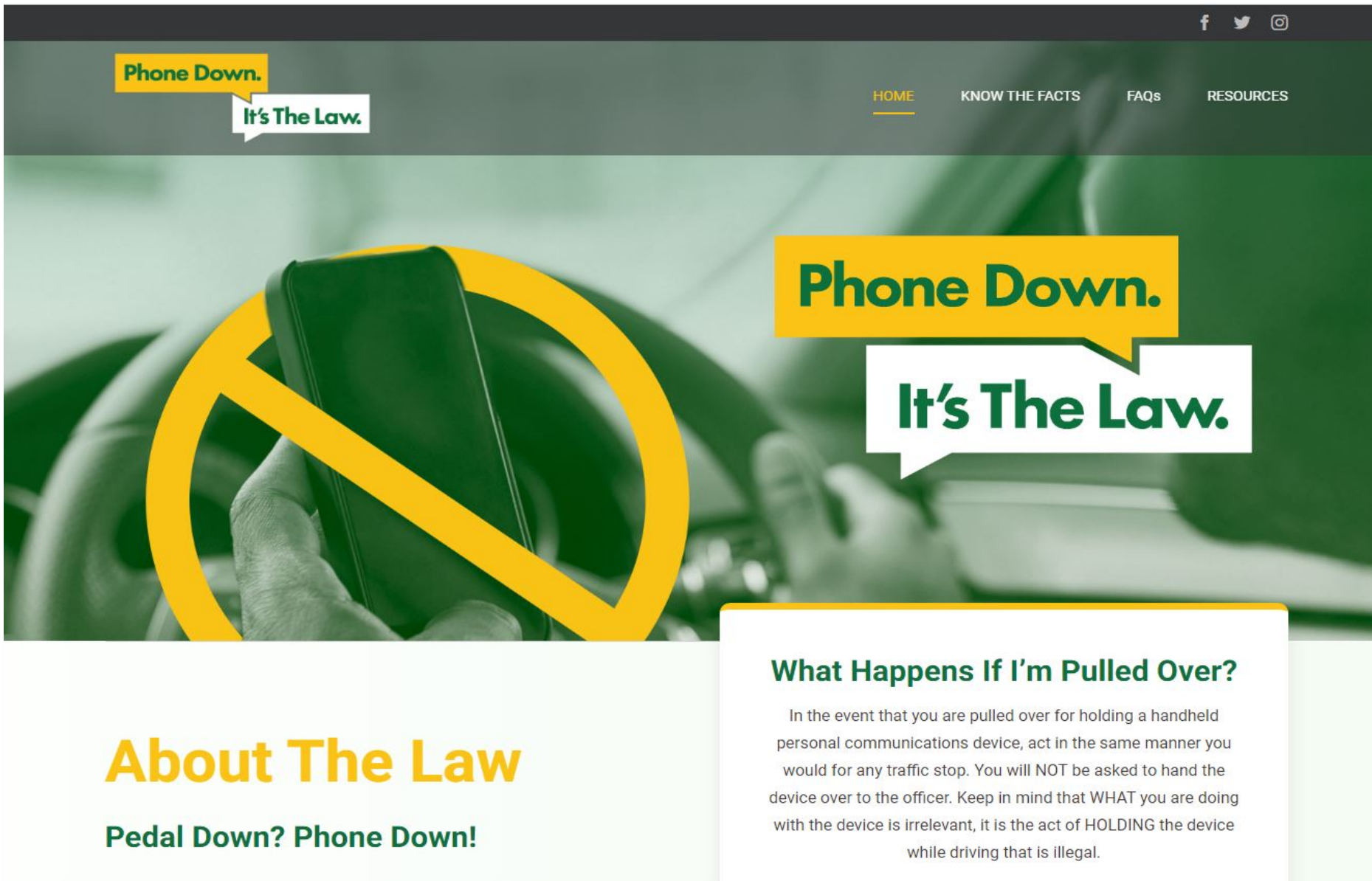
**The message needed to be clean  
and direct.**







Tactic: To create a campaign that would be direct, relatable and appealing to a diverse audience.



**Website**

**Phone Down.**

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[PhoneDown.org](http://PhoneDown.org)



**Poster**





## What Happens If I'm Pulled Over?



In the event that you are pulled over for holding a handheld personal communications device, act in the same manner you would for any traffic stop. You will NOT be asked to hand the device over to the officer. Keep in mind that WHAT you are doing with the device is irrelevant, it is the act of HOLDING the device while driving that is illegal.

Phone Down.

It's The Law.

## Breaking The Law Will Cost You

A person who violates **46.2-818.2** is subject to a fine of \$125 for the first offense and \$250 for the second and subsequent offenses. A person who is convicted of reckless driving who was also in violation of 46.2-818.2 when committing the offense can be fined up to \$2,500, up to 12 months in jail, and up to a six month license suspension, but shall be fined a mandatory minimum fine of \$250. A person who violates this law while driving in a highway work zone shall be fined \$250.



Connect with us on social media!

Show your support by using **#phonedown** & **#handsfreeVA**

PhoneDown.org



## Phone Down.

It's The Law.

New Virginia Law Effective January 1, 2021



PhoneDown.org



# Tri-Fold Brochure

## Phone Down.

### It's The Law.

Effective January 1, 2021, it will be illegal to hold a handheld personal communications device (e.g., your smartphone) while driving a moving motor vehicle on Virginia highways. This new law is one of many ways the state is bucking down on distracted driving.

## What's Off-Limits?

While driving, it will be illegal to hold a mobile device in your hand while doing some activities, such as:

- Dialing a phone number;
- Sending a text message;
- Updating/browsing social media;
- Video conferencing;
- Shopping online;
- Watching movies;
- Checking the weather;
- Playing games;
- And more.

## The Five Exceptions

1. The operator of any emergency vehicle while he/she is engaged in the performance of his/her official duties;
2. An operator who is lawfully parked or stopped;
3. Any person using a handheld personal communications device in order to report an emergency;
4. The use of an amateur or a citizens band radio; or
5. The operator of any Department of Transportation related vehicle during the performance of traffic incident management services.



## Can I Still Use Bluetooth?

This new law does not prohibit making or receiving phone calls using "hands-free" technology, such as Bluetooth or integrated systems within the motor vehicle. Simply said, you cannot hold your phone while driving for any reason. If you must use your device, we encourage you to pull over to a safe location and park your car before handling.



## Know The Facts

- Virginia is the 22nd state in the Nation to address handheld phone use while driving.
- "Each day in the United States, more than nine people are killed and more than 1,153 people are injured as a result of distracted driving." - **The Centers for Disease Control**
- "80% of all crashes and 65% of all near-crashes involve driver inattention within three seconds of the crash." - **Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTI)**
- Virginia drivers observed in a 2018 Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) roadside survey were 57% more likely to be manipulating a cellphone than drivers in a 2014 survey.
- "Texting is by far the most egregious form of distracted driving and increases your crash risk by 2300% because it involves all three kinds of distraction – manual, visual, and cognitive." - **Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTI)**
- In a Liberty Mutual survey, 80% of teens reported that they viewed APP use while driving as "not distracting." - **Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety**
- "Motorists with smartphones use handheld devices in 88 out of every 100 trips. Therefore, Zendrive estimates that there are about 600 million trips involving distracted driving in the United States every day." - **Zendrive**





**Tactic:** To mobilize and motivate community champions through the Hands-Free Virginia Advisory Council and the Virginia Partners for Safe Driving to help get the word out.

- AAA Tidewater added a message to their phone system to advise that the new law was upcoming.
- Carilion New River Medical Center distributed posters and e-posters and sent mass email to all employees.
- Henrico PD filmed a PSA in partnership with their surrounding counties about the new law.
- National Safety Council sent a newsletter to all of the Virginia members



- Displayed information on VMS statewide
- Posters in public spaces and bathrooms
- Banner message on 511 Virginia website and phone recording
- Messaging on interstate CMS
- Messaging from online toolkits posted to internal electronic bulletin boards
- Wrote a story for VDOT employees on "Inside VDOT" about the law
- Created a VDOT-TV episode about the law
- Assisted with big social media push

# VDOT

Placed banners at rest areas:



# YOVASO



- Youth of Virginia Speak Out About Traffic Safety (YOVASO) incorporated the message into all of their fall campaign messaging
- Posted to Facebook and Twitter
- Shared information with Youth Advisory Council, Advisory Board and almost 200 schools/school groups,
- Participated in two TV media interviews about the new law
- Added message to YOVASO holiday email.







## Virginia Trucking Association

The Virginia Trucking Association shared information during truck driver appreciation event. Placed signage at weigh stations. Sent the word out to members.



# Community Partners helped increase the footprint of this project significantly.

- \* More than 300 partners ordered materials from our FREE online store
- \* 46% of brochures ordered were ordered by law enforcement. 30% of posters were ordered by non-profits
- \* Hundreds of entities shared our content on social media and used our hashtags #handsfreeVA #phonedown









Tactic: To leverage our social media platforms to push the “Phone Down, It’s the Law” message out

# Twitter Ad



Impressions	Audience	Follows	Duration
2,518,022	Virginia	686	20 Days



DRIVE SMART Virginia

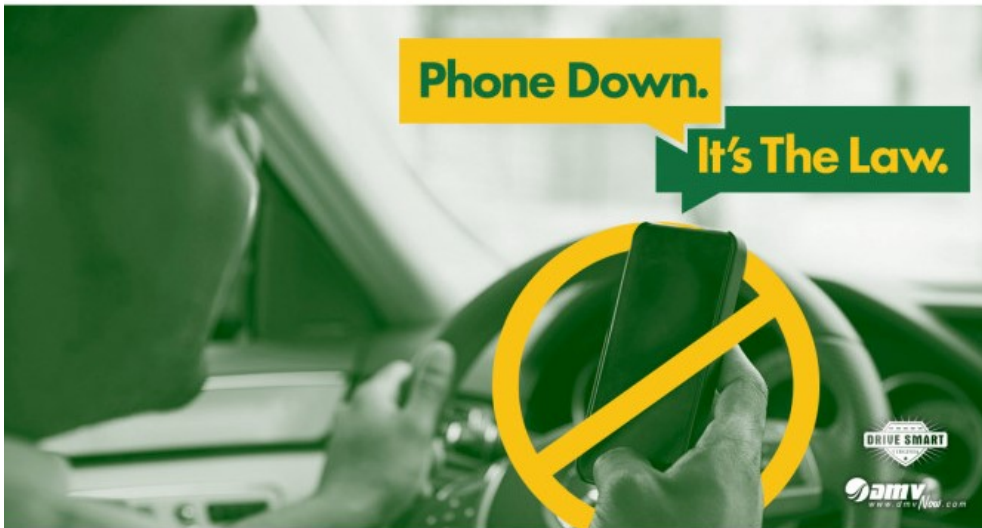
Sponsored



Beginning January 1, 2021, it'll be illegal to hold your phone while driving on Virginia highways. Kick the habit now to avoid a ticket later.

#PhoneDown

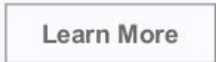
## *Phone Down, It's The Law*



drivesmartva.org

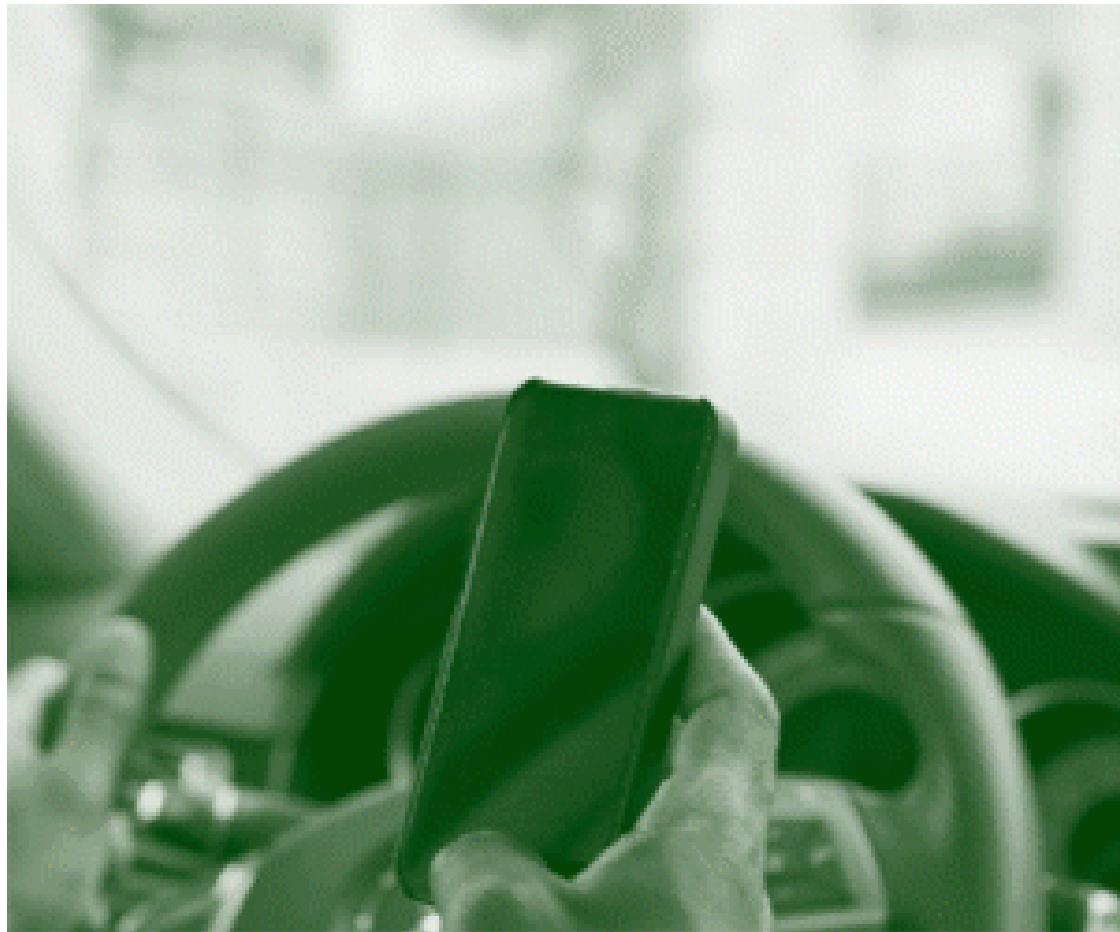
**Pedal down? Phone down!**

DRIVE SMART Virginia



# Facebook Ad

Reach	Engagement	Shares	Duration
116,200	74,340	1,358	19 Days



***Phone Down, It's The Law***

# Instagram Ad



Impressions	ThruPlays	Results Rate	Duration
324,419	330,200	101.85%	19 Days



Like Page

Beginning January 1, 2021, it'll be illegal to hold your phone while driving on Virginia highways. Kick the habit now to avoid a ticket later. #PhoneDown

## *Phone Down, It's The Law*



drivesmartva.org

**Pedal down? Phone down!**

DRIVE SMART Virginia

Learn More



Tactic: To leverage earned media opportunities to reach the widest, most diverse population possible.



## Eyes up, phone down

Jenny Haugh, News Correspondent Dec 28, 2020



Altavista Journal file photo

- 19 Newspaper Stories
- 30 Television Stories
- 7 Online Stories (blogs, etc.)

# Public Service Announcement

State Farm Insurance funded a PSA to raise awareness about the new law.



**Social Media Results** (December 9 – December 31, 2020)

Platform	Reach	Shares	Likes
Twitter	4,658	91	99
Facebook	35,532	294	59



## Radio PSA

DRIVE SMART Virginia produced a 30-second PSA. The Virginia Association of Broadcasters distributed the PSA to its 230 member radio stations.

A screenshot of a SoundCloud player interface. On the left is a profile picture of Drive Smart VA, which is the same shield logo seen in the top right. The profile name "Drive Smart VA" and track name "NewLaw" are displayed. To the right, it says "8 months ago" and "# Learning". The main part of the player is a waveform representing the audio, with a progress bar at the bottom right showing "0:33". Below the waveform are buttons for "Like", "Repost", "Share", and "More". At the bottom right of the player area, there is a play button icon and the number "23".

<https://soundcloud.com/user-351119834/newlaw>

# Podcast

DRIVE SMART Virginia produces an interview-format podcast focused on traffic safety. This year, *The Road We Travel* did a 3-part series on the new law and distracted driving.



[Episode 3: VTTI, Dr. Charlie Klauer](#)



# Buckle Up Phone Down

April was Distracted Driving Awareness Month




## Store

Many of these items are available for download on our [Toolkits page](#) here.


Categories Cart - 0 Items Proceed to Checkout

### Distracted Driving




**\*\*NEW!\*\*** Buckle Up...  
BR-DD-22  
"Buckle Up Phone Down Virginia" tri-fold brochure with

qty 1 [Add to Cart](#)




**\*\*NEW!\*\*** Buckle Up...  
PO-DD-22  
"Buckle Up Phone Down Virginia" poster featuring

qty 1 [Add to Cart](#)




Buckle Up Phone D...  
PO-DD-17  
Distracted Driving Awareness Month poster - "Buckle Up

qty 1 [Add to Cart](#)




Buckle Up Phone D...  
PO-DD-14  
"Buckle Up Phone Down" with overhead graphic

qty 1 [Add to Cart](#)




Buckle Up Phone D...  
PO-DD-15  
Buckle Up Phone Down poster with overhead graphic

qty 1 [Add to Cart](#)



Buckle Up Phone D...  
PO-DD-18  
Distracted Driving Awareness Month Poster. Asks all drivers to

qty 1 [Add to Cart](#)



Phone Down It's Th...  
PO-PDIL  
"Phone Down It's The Law" poster - reminding drivers of the

qty 1 [Add to Cart](#)

drivesmartva.org

# Online Toolkit



- BUPD\_BROCHURE1** – PDF 10 MB
- ABROCHATE. SUELTA EL CELULAR (FOLLETO)** – PDF 5 MB  
Uno de los comportamientos más peligrosos al manejar es la distracción, y no solo se refiere al uso de teléfonos.
- BUPD\_POSTER1[34555]** – PDF 8 MB  
BUPD Poster
- HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 727** – PDF 10 KB  
Image of House Joint Resolution 727 which designated April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month.
- EMPLOYER DDAM ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS** – PDF 213 KB  
Ideas your company can use to engage employees in Distracted Driving Awareness Month.
- SAMPLETWEETS-2022** – DOCX 72 KB  
Suggested DDAM Tweets 2022
- SAMPLEEMAILV2022** – DOCX 70 KB
- SAMPLEMEDIARELEASEV2022** – DOCX 71 KB
- SAMPLE LETTER TO EMPLOYEES2022** – DOCX 62 KB
- DDAM EMPLOYEE SURVEY QUESTIONS** – DOCX 66 KB  
Ask your employees to take an anonymous survey about distracted driving.
- BUPD\_SOCIALMEDIA\_011422\_BUPD\_FACEBOOK\_HANDSFREE** – PNG 213 KB
- BUPD\_SOCIALMEDIA\_011422\_BUPD\_TWITTER\_HANDSFREE** – PNG 212 KB
- 9THDDS\_DIGITAL\_020822\_9THDDS\_EMAIL HEADER** – PNG 19 KB



# Presentations and Simulator





# Distracted Driving Summit



## Tracks Focused On:

- Law Enforcement
- Community and Corporate Strategies
- Vulnerable Populations
- Research and Technology



# Distracted Driving Summit



**JOIN US!!**

**August 18-19, 2022**

**Hilton Norfolk The Main**



Thank you!

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