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Jesse White Calls on Drivers to Avoid Distracted Driving & Adhere to Move Over Law
April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White is calling on drivers to stop driving while distracted – with a special emphasis on avoiding texting while driving at all times. He also underscored the importance of adhering to the Move Over Law, also known as Scott’s Law, designed to protect law enforcement and emergency responders who are stopped on the side of roadways.

“I am sickened over the recent tragedies that have taken the lives of law enforcement officers who are simply doing their jobs,” said White. “If you see a stopped emergency vehicle on the side of the road, reduce speed and change lanes if possible.”

White announced he is adding a reminder about the Move Over Law to driver’s license renewal notices. The office is required by state law to mail these notices.

“We have a responsibility to drive safely, said White. “And we have a duty to protect those who protect us by moving over when approaching a stopped emergency vehicle. Aside from that, it is the law.”

Motorists convicted of violating the Move Over Law face a minimum fine of \$100 up to \$10,000 and the offense goes on the motorist’s driving record. A violator’s driver’s license is suspended for 24 months in the event of a fatality and six months in the event of personal injury.

In addition to the importance of adhering to the Move Over Law, White called on motorists to avoid distracted driving and to stop texting while driving. According to NHTSA, a motorist traveling at 55 mph takes their eyes off the road on average for five seconds when sending or reading a text. This equates to driving blindly for the length of a football field.

White initiated a new law set to take effect July 1, 2019 that further cracks down on texting while driving by classifying first-time offenses as moving violations. Under the current law, which took effect in 2014, second and subsequent texting while driving offenses are treated as moving violations, while first offenses are treated as nonmoving violations.

White noted that while Illinois has been a national leader in efforts to combat distracted driving, we can always do more.

“Every month should be National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, not just April,” said White. “My office continues to look at new and innovative ways to raise awareness about this issue.”

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