



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER PREVENTION UNIT

Friday Night Live Program

1400 Emeline Ave., SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY STUDENTS REPORT SHOCKING AMOUNTS OF DISTRACTED DRIVERS NEAR SCHOOL ZONES

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY– Students with Pacific Collegiate School and the Friday Night Live (FNL) Youth Council participated in Roadwatch, an action research and data collection project administered by the California Friday Night Live Partnership (CFNLP) on Thursday, October 26th. Students took to the streets to monitor intersections near their schools observing more than 780 drivers. They found more than 140 incidents of distracted driving in the intersections of Western Drive and Mission Street, and Blackburn Street and Riverside Drive near Pacific Collegiate and Watsonville High schools.

Distracted driving includes anything that takes your eyes, hands, or mind away from the task of driving.

Top Distractions Reported

- Talking to passengers: 42 incidents
- Use of a handheld device (*such as a cellphone*): 42 incidents
- Eating or drinking: 28 incidents

Not Just Cellphones

Additional driving distractions observed by today's Roadwatch participants:

- Personal grooming: 17 incidents
- Reaching for an item: 10 incidents
- Loud music: 5 incidents
- Smoking or vaping: 5 incidents

"I'm not surprised that these are the top distractions," said Johan, FNL Youth member. "I participated today so I could make a positive impact by creating more awareness around this issue." FNL youth will use the data collected for the Roadwatch project to advocate for positive changes in their communities.

For youth in California, distracted driving is an especially pertinent issue. According to the National Highway Traffic Administration, 7% of drivers ages 15-20 involved in fatal crashes were distracted at the time of the crash.

Drivers aren't the only people impacted by the consequences of distracted driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) found that in 2020, 1 in 13 people killed by distracted drivers were not in vehicles; they were walking, riding bikes, or otherwise outside vehicles.

FNL is a statewide program that builds partnerships for positive and healthy youth development and engages youth as active leaders and resources in their communities. For more information about Friday Night Live, visit www.fridaynightlive.org.

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