



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

From the office of Anoka County Sheriff James Stuart

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Teen Driver Causes Crash While Watching "Stranger Things"

Distracted driving remains a major concern on the roads of Anoka County. Every day deputies encounter drivers who are on their cell phones, texting, or otherwise not paying attention to the road. On rare occasions, we see drivers who are attempting to watch movies or other videos while driving. This was the case over the weekend when deputies responded to a report of a serious crash involving a semitruck and passenger vehicle in northern Anoka County.

Arriving emergency personnel found the driver of the passenger vehicle, a teenage female, suffering from minor injuries. Her vehicle suffered significant damage and had rolled over after crossing the centerline, directly into the path of the semitruck. Multiple witnesses reported the female's vehicle was fully in the oncoming lane before the crash. The driver of the semitruck, an adult male, swerved to the shoulder to try to avoid the crash, likely saving the other driver's life in the process. Instead of striking the semitruck head on, the passenger vehicle struck the trailer.

The female driver denied being on her cell phone before the crash, but the investigating deputies observed that her vehicle's Bluetooth system was still streaming the audio to Stranger Things on Netflix. When confronted with this information, the driver admitted to watching Netflix while driving. She was issued a citation and released.

We are relieved this incident was not more serious, as it easily could have been. From 2016 through 2020 more than 39,000 crashes in Minnesota were related to distracted driving, causing 155 fatalities and nearly 1,000 serious injuries. As a part of our extra traffic enforcement campaign, deputies will continue to stop these drivers to enforce the laws that are designed to make our roads safer for everyone.

We continue to encourage parents to talk with their teen drivers about the dangers of distracted driving. The consequences can be far-reaching and tragic.

If you are on your cell phone while driving in Anoka County, you should expect to be stopped and cited.

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