

Anti-Texting Law Facts

What the Law Does

- The law prohibits as a primary offense any driver from using an Interactive Wireless Communication Device (IWCD) to send, read or write a text-based communication while his or her vehicle is in motion.
- Defines an IWCD as a wireless phone, personal digital assistant, smart phone, portable or mobile computer or similar devices that can be used for texting, instant messaging, emailing or browsing the Internet.
- Defines a text-based communication as a text message, instant message, email or other written communication composed or received on an IWCD.
- Institutes a \$50 fine for convictions under this section.
- Makes clear that this law supersedes and preempts any local ordinances restricting the use of interactive wireless devices by drivers.

The penalty is a summary offense. The law does not authorize the seizure of an IWCD. The law goes into effect March 8, 2012, 120 calendar days from Nov. 9, 2011.

The texting ban does NOT include the use of a GPS device, a system or device that is physically or electronically integrated into the vehicle, or a communications device that is affixed to a mass transit vehicle, bus or school bus.

Background, Nationwide Perspective

In 2010, there were 13,790 crashes in Pennsylvania where distracted driving played a role.

There were 1,093 crashes statewide where at least one driver used a handheld phone, with 11 people losing their lives in those crashes.

Today there are few individuals without an IWCD (cell phone). There is little debate about the safety hazards of texting while driving. Numerous studies indicate that texting drivers typically have their eyes diverted from the road longer than any other distraction. Banning drivers from using any IWCD for text-based communications while operating a motor vehicle will help to ensure that their full attention is on the task of driving.

Nationwide, 34 states and the District of Columbia have already banned texting while driving; 31 of those states plus the District of Columbia ban texting as a primary offense.