

Cellphone legislation school newspaper

Intro:

Legislation banning the use of hand-held cellphones while driving will become law Jan. 1, 2010. Distracted driving is a serious road safety issue and the passing of this law makes Saskatchewan roadways safer.

What does the new law say?

- The new legislation prohibits all drivers from using hand-held cellphones to talk, text, email or surf the Internet.
- The law also prohibits new drivers, meaning drivers in Saskatchewan's Graduated Driver's Licensing (GDL) program, from using cellphones of any type while operating a motor vehicle.

What do you mean by a new driver?

- A new driver is a driver presently in Saskatchewan's GDL program, which is the stages new drivers go through after they get their drivers licence.

Why aren't new drivers allowed to use hands-free devices?

- Restricting the use of cellphones will assist new drivers in gaining valuable driving experience under lower-risk conditions. This is consistent with the principles behind graduated licensing.
- The combination of inexperience, tendency toward greater risk-taking and significantly higher than average use of distracting hand-held electronic devices, including cellphones, makes this group particularly vulnerable. A 2008 CWTA survey reported young cellphone users send an average of three times as many text messages as adults do.
- About 75% of new drivers are between the ages of 15 and 18 and continue to be over-represented in collisions. These drivers make up 6% of Saskatchewan drivers but account for close to 20% of collisions where driver distraction was a contributing factor.

What is the penalty for using your handheld cellphone while driving?

- The penalty will be a \$280 fine, which includes the Victims of Crime Surcharge of \$60, and four demerit points under SGI's Safe Driver Recognition and Driver Improvement programs.

Are cellphones the only form of driver distraction?

- Talking and texting on cellphones are only two of many behaviours that contribute to distracted driving. Other common distractions are eating, changing CDs and tending to children. Some people even groom themselves and some try to read while driving. Cellphone use, however, is a rapidly increasing source of driver distraction.

Why not ban other things that contribute to driver distractions?

- SGI will continue to educate drivers about all forms of driver distraction, and law enforcement still has the ability to charge distracted drivers with driving without due care and attention, which also attracts a fine of \$280 and four demerit points.

Life's full of fun stuff, a Wii, new shoes, concert tickets, new clothes, a night out with that special someone in your life, or a \$280 traffic ticket for using your cellphone while driving! It's your choice!

Be smart and put your phone in the trunk, your girlfriend's purse, in your sock, anywhere, just put your cellphone away and don't use it while you are driving.

Always remember take care out there.