

Proposed Legislation – Prohibited Use of Hand Held Communication Device While Driving

Current Law:

- Missouri's current texting law prohibits drivers 21 years of age or younger from sending, reading, or writing an electronic message while driving.
- Since 2012, Commercial Motor Vehicle drivers are required to use hands free communication devices.

Additional Information as you may need it:

- Safety is a priority for MoDOT. It's important for drivers to focus their full attention on their driving. MoDOT has banned all cell phone use, including voice in state vehicles, as well as personal vehicles when on company time.
- Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving.
- Distracted driving is a leading cause of traffic crashes in Missouri and nationwide.
- Distracted driving contributed to 20,880 traffic crashes in Missouri in 2017.
 - Over the last three years, cell phone related crashes in Missouri have increased by more than 35 percent.
 - Distracted driving is not just a younger driver problem. In the last three years, approximately 70 percent of cell phone related crashes in Missouri involved drivers age 22 or older.
- Studies show texting drivers spend up to 400% more time with their eyes off the road (*American Medical Association*)
- Texting while driving increases the risk of a car crash by 50% (*American Automobile Association*).
- Because text messaging requires visual, manual and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most dangerous distraction.
- The average text diverts driver attention to their device for 5 seconds. At 55 mph, your vehicle will travel the length of a football field, with the driver essentially blindfolded.
- Fifty percent of teen drivers say they text while driving.
- Drivers are encouraged to return text messages after they are finished driving or pull safely to the side of the road to use their cell phones.
- The following cities have an all driver texting ordinance: Chesterfield, Ellisville, Florissant, Kirkwood, Lake St. Louis, O'Fallon, St. Charles, St. John, Manchester and Columbia.

Distraction.Gov:

- 71% of teens say they have sent a text message while driving; 78% have read a text while driving
- Nationwide, 3,450 people were killed in distracted driving crashes in 2016.

Centers for Disease Control:

- Nationwide, approximately 9 people are killed each day and more than 1,000 are injured in crashes that are reported to involve a distracted driver.

AT&T:

- Nearly 9-in-10 people engage in smartphone activities while driving.
- Nearly 5-in-10 smartphone users tap into social media while driving. Almost 3-in-10 surf the net. And almost 3-in-10 video chat!
- 57 percent of people are more likely to stop driving distracted if a friend or passenger pressures them to.