

Position Statement - Ontario Ban on Hand-Held Devices – Bill 118 – echo 113

Effective date October 26 2009

Description

Key highlights:

- Ontario's ban on hand-held devices and other hand-held communications and entertainment devices while driving will take effect **on October 26, 2009**.
- Under Ontario's new law, fines of up to \$500 can be levied against distracted drivers who **text, type, email, dial, or chat** using a prohibited hand-held device.
- Following a three-month period that begins October 26, 2009, where the focus will be on educating drivers, police will start issuing tickets on February 1, 2010.
- **Hands-free use will still be permitted.**
- Ontario joins more than 50 countries worldwide with the ban on hand-held devices while driving. Canadian provinces that currently have a ban include Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Overview (hand-held vs. hands-free usage):

- Drivers will not be permitted to use **hand-held** devices when driving, with the following exceptions:
 - calling 9-1-1 in an emergency situation, and
 - when the driver has safely pulled off the roadway and is stationary or is lawfully parked.
 - Drivers must only use wireless devices that can be used in a "**hands-free**" manner:
 - a cell phone with an earpiece or headset using voice dialling, or plugged into the vehicle's sound system,
 - a global positioning system (GPS) device that is properly secured to the dashboard or another accessible place in the vehicle, or
 - a portable audio player that has been plugged into the vehicle's sound system.
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Questions & answers

Q1: How is Bell supporting safe driving?

A1: All of Bell's handsets are shipped with a wired headset that can be used for hands-free calling. Also, the vast majority of Bell's products are compatible with Bluetooth headsets for hands-free access to a client's mobile phone or smartphone. To promote safe driving, Bell Mobility regularly communicates safety messages. Furthermore, Bell offers a great line up of stylish accessories which allow for hands-free communication. Visit your local Bell Store or check out bell.ca/accessories to find out which headsets are compatible with your personal device!

Q2: What are examples of distractions you should avoid while driving?

A2: While the responsibility of operating any vehicle in a responsible manner ultimately lies with the individual driver, Bell advises clients and employees to always be aware of potential distractions while driving. These may take many forms, including (but not limited to):

- eating and drinking,
- reading or writing,

- using a wireless device,
- grooming,
- minding children,
- conversing with passengers,
- smoking,
- adjusting in-car stereos and electronics, and
- minding pets.

Q3: What are some tips to reduce driver distraction?

A3:

- Use a headset or earpiece while driving; if your device supports voice activated dialing, please use it.
- Plan for safe locations to stop (for example, rest stops or commuter lots) to make and receive calls.
- Allow calls to go to voice mail or allow a passenger to make and receive calls.

Q4: Where can I learn more about Ontario's ban on hand-held devices?

A4: Please visit the Ontario Government website at <http://www.ontario.ca/transportation>.

Q5: Are there any drivers exempt from Ontario's law on use of hand-held devices while driving?

A5: Police, fire department and emergency medical services personnel will be permitted to use hand-held wireless communications devices and view display screens in the normal performance of their duties.

Q6: I heard that fines can be up to \$1000. Under what circumstances can this be levied?

A6: Police can charge drivers with careless driving if they do not pay full attention to the driving task. If you are convicted of careless driving you will automatically receive six demerit points, fines up to \$1,000 and/or a jail term of six months. In some cases, your licence may be suspended for up to two years. This is one of Ontario's toughest rules of the road.
