

Electronic Device Prohibitions

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Distracted Driving Facts

- NHTSA reported (2012), driver distraction was cause of 18% of fatal crashes (3,328 deaths with 421,000 add'l injuries)
- Va. Tech Transportation Institute found text messaging creates a crash risk 23 x greater than driving while not distracted
- 11% of drivers aged 18-20 involved in crashes (and survived) admitted to sending/receiving texts while driving
- Tx A & M Health Science Center School of Public Health study found car crash rates declined between 2003 & 2010 by 7% in states that implemented texting bans
 - Unable to draw a direct relationship, but correlation suggested

Distracted Driving Facts

- University of Utah Dept. of Psychology study found the following comparisons between cell phone using drivers & drunk drivers:
 - Cell Phone users were
 - Involved in more rear-end collisions,
 - Had a 7.5% greater following distance
 - Took 14.8% longer to recover speed lost during breaking
 - Drunk drivers tended to brake 26.1% harder than cell phone using drivers
 - Study found no statistical difference between the use of hand held & hands-free devices

Cell Phone/Texting Laws

- Per Insurance Institute for Highway Safety:
 - 14 states & D.C. ban use of hand held devices
 - 37 states & D.C. ban use of cell phones by novice drivers (including Texas)
 - Texting is banned for drivers in 46 states & D.C. (Texas, Missouri, Montana & Arizona do not)
 - According to TxDOT, at least 40 Texas cities have enacted city wide texting bans; in Houston Metro Area:
 - Bellaire
 - Conroe
 - Galveston
 - Missouri City
 - Tomball
 - West University Place

Wireless Communications Device

- Wireless Communications Device is defined as a device that uses a commercial mobile service as defined by 47 U.S.C. Section 332.
 - Cell phones
 - Tablets
 - Laptops, if connected to a mobile service

Texas Transportation Code

- Allows Municipalities to prohibit Cell Phone use in School Zones
 - Must post sign at entry to every school zone in the jurisdiction
 - Signs must state that:
 - Wireless Communication Device use is Prohibited
 - Vehicle Operator using a wireless communications device is subject to a fine

Texas Transportation Code

- Allows cities to prohibit use of Wireless Communications Devices while driving throughout the city
 - City must post signs at each entry point into a city from a State, U.S. or Interstate highway
 - Signs must state that:
 - Wireless Communications Device use within the city is Prohibited
 - Vehicle Operator using a wireless communications device is subject to a fine

Defenses

- Used to make an emergency call
- Vehicle was stopped
- Operator is using a hands free device
- If prohibition is only for school zones, a sign was not posted at the entrance to the school zone

What This Means for Houston

- Cell Phone Ban in School Zone
 - Approximately 8000 entry points
 - Some School Districts have installed some signs (less than 1000)
 - Signs cost approximately \$150 each to install
 - Total est. cost: \$1.05M to \$1.4M

What This Means for Houston

- City Wide Texting Ban
- Roughly 44 entry points on State, U.S. & Interstate Highways
 - Toll Roads not included
 - May need 2 signs (main lanes & feeder roads)
- Facilities maintained by TxDOT & sign installation cost est. up to \$625 each
- Conservative estimate (88 signs): \$55,000