



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE of STATE LEGISLATURES

## Cellular Phone Use and Texting While Driving Laws

7/1/2015

The prevalence of cellular phones, new research, and publicized crashes has started many debates related to the role cell phones play in driver distraction. This chart details state cellular phone use and texting while driving laws.

- **Hand-held Cell Phone Use Ban:** 14 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands prohibit all drivers from using hand-held cell phones while driving.
- **All Cell Phone ban:** No state bans all cell phone use for all drivers, but 37 states and D.C. ban all cell phone use by novice or teen drivers, and 20 states and D.C. prohibit cell phone use for school bus drivers.
- **Text Messaging ban:** 46 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands ban text messaging for all drivers.
  - 3 states prohibit text messaging by novice or teen drivers.
  - 3 states restrict school bus drivers from texting.

Source: Governor's Highway Safety Administration.

The box allows you to conduct a full text search or use the dropdown menu option to select a state.

  

States	Hand-held ban	All cell phone ban	Texting ban	Enforcement	Crash Data Collection
Alabama	No	Drivers age 16 and 17 who have held an intermediate license for less than 6 months.	All drivers	Primary: texting by all drivers Secondary: cell phone use by young drivers	
Alaska	No	No	All drivers	Primary: texting by all drivers	Yes
Arizona	No	School bus drivers	No	Primary: cell phone use by school bus drivers	
Arkansas	Drivers ages 18 to 20 years of age	School bus drivers, drivers younger than 18	All drivers	Primary: for texting by all drivers and cell phone use by school bus drivers. Secondary: for cell phone use by young drivers	Yes
California	All drivers	School and transit bus drivers and drivers younger than 18	All drivers	Primary: hand held and texting by all drivers. Secondary: all cell phone use by young drivers.	Yes
Colorado	No	Drivers younger than 18	All drivers	Primary: for texting by all drivers and for drivers younger than 18.	Yes
Connecticut	All drivers	Leamer's permit holders, drivers younger than 18, and school bus drivers	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	
Delaware	All drivers	Leamer's permit and intermediate license holders and school bus drivers	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
District of Columbia	All drivers	School bus drivers and learner's permit holders	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Florida	No	No	All drivers (effective 10/01/13)	Secondary: for texting by all drivers.	Yes
Georgia	Drivers younger than 18	School bus drivers. Drivers younger than 18.	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Hawaii	All Drivers (effective 7-1-13)	Drivers younger than 18	All Drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	
Idaho	No	No	All Drivers	Primary: for texting by all drivers.	Yes***
Illinois	All Drivers	Learner's permit holders younger than 19, drivers	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes

States	Hand-held ban	All cell phone ban younger than 19, and school bus drivers	Texting ban	Enforcement	Crash Data Collection
Indiana	No	Drivers under the age of 18.	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Iowa	No	Learner's permit and intermediate license holders	All drivers	Primary: for drivers cell phone use by young drivers. Secondary: for texting by all drivers.	Yes
Kansas	No	Learner's permit and intermediate license holders	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Kentucky	No	Drivers younger than 18, School Bus Drivers.	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Louisiana	No	School bus drivers, learner's permit and intermediate license holders, drivers under age 18	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Maine**	No	Learner's permit and intermediate license holders	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Maryland	All drivers, School Bus Drivers.	Learner's permit and intermediate license holders under 18. School bus drivers.	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses. (effective 10/01/13)	Yes
Massachusetts	Local option	School bus drivers, passenger bus drivers, drivers younger than 18.	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Michigan	Local option	Level 1 or 2 license holders.	All drivers	Primary: for texting by all drivers and level 1 or 2 license holders.	Yes
Minnesota	No	School bus drivers, learner's permit holders, and provisional license holders during the first 12 months after licensing	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Mississippi	No	School bus drivers.	All drivers (effective July 2015)	Primary	Yes
Missouri	No	No	Drivers 21 years or younger.	Primary: Drivers 21 years or younger	
Montana	No	No	No	Not applicable	Yes
Nebraska	No	Learner's permit and intermediate license holders younger than 18	All drivers	Secondary: for all offenses.	Yes
Nevada	All drivers	No	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
New Hampshire	Yes	No	All drivers	Primary	
New Jersey	All drivers	School bus drivers, and learner's permit and intermediate license holders	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
New Mexico	Local option	Learners permit and intermediate license holders.	All Drivers	Primary: texting by all drivers.	Yes
New York	All drivers	No	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
North Carolina	No	Drivers younger than 18 and school bus drivers	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	
North Dakota	Drivers younger than 18	Drivers younger than 18	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Ohio	Local option	Drivers younger than 18.	All drivers	Primary: for drivers younger than 18. Secondary: for texting by all drivers.	
Oklahoma	Learner's permit and intermediate license	School Bus Drivers and Public Transit Drivers	All Drivers. (Eff. Nov. 1, 2015)	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes

States	Hand-held ban holders, school bus drivers and public transit drivers	All cell phone ban	Texting ban	Enforcement	Crash Data Collection
Oregon	All drivers	Drivers younger than 18	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Pennsylvania	Local option	No	All drivers	Primary: for texting by all drivers.	Yes
Puerto Rico	All drivers		All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	
Rhode Island	No	School bus drivers and drivers younger than 18	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
South Carolina	No	No	All drivers	Primary	Yes***
South Dakota	No	Learner's permit and intermediate license holders (effective 07/01/14)	All drivers (effective 07/01/14)	Secondary: for all offenses. (effective 07/01/14)	Yes
Tennessee	No	School bus drivers, and learner's permit and intermediate license holders	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Texas	Drivers in school crossing zones	Bus drivers. Drivers younger than 18	Bus drivers when a passenger 17 and younger is present; intermediate license holders for first 12 months, drivers in school crossing zones	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Utah	See footnote*	Drivers under the age of 18.	All drivers	Primary for texting; secondary for talking on hand-held phone	Yes
Vermont	All drivers (effective 10/2014)	Drivers younger than 18 shall not use any portable electronic device while driving.	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	
Virgin Islands	Yes				Yes
Virginia	No	Drivers younger than 18 and school bus drivers	All drivers	Primary: for texting by all drivers. (effective 07/01/13) Secondary: for drivers younger than 18.	Yes
Washington	All drivers	Learners permit and intermediate license holders.	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
West Virginia	All Drivers	Drivers younger than 18 who hold either a learner's permit or an intermediate license	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	
Wisconsin	No	Learner or Intermediate License holder	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	
Wyoming	No	No	All drivers	Primary: for all offenses.	Yes
Total	All drivers: 13 states and District of Columbia, Guam, Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.	School Bus drivers: 20 states and District of Columbia. Teen drivers: 37 states and District of Columbia.	All Drivers: 44 states and District of Columbia, Guam, Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.	Primary for all drivers texting: 39. Secondary for all drivers texting: 5	48 and U.S. Virgin Islands and District of Columbia.

Source: Source Insurance Institute for Highway Safety 2013.

Governor's Highway Safety Association

\* Utah considers speaking on a cell phone, without a hands-free device, to be an offense only if a driver is also committing some other moving violation (other than speeding).

\*\* Maine has a law that makes driving while distracted a traffic infraction. 29-A M.R.S.A. Sec. 2117.

\*\*\* Listed as a part of contributing factors

## NCSL Member Toolbox

### Members Resources

- Get Involved With NCSL
- Jobs Clearinghouse
- Legislative Careers
- NCSL Staff Directories
- Staff Directories
- StateConnect Directory

### Policy & Research Resources

- Bill Information Service
- Legislative Websites
- NCSL Bookstore
- State Legislatures Magazine

### Accessibility Support

- Tel: 1-800-659-2656 or 711
- Accessibility Support
- Accessibility Policy

### Meeting Resources

- Calendar
- Online Registration

### Press Room

- Media Contact
- NCSL in the News
- Press Releases

### Denver

7700 East First Place  
Denver, CO 80230  
Tel: 303-364-7700 | Fax: 303-364-7800

### Washington

444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
Tel: 202-624-5400 | Fax: 202-737-1000