

## **HANDHELD COMMUNICATION INFORMATION**

### **EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2019 - Distracted DRIVING**

#### **What counts as distracted driving**

Ontario's distracted driving laws apply to the use of hand-held communication/entertainment devices and certain display screens.

While you are driving, including when you are stopped in traffic or at a red light, **it is illegal to:**

- use a phone or other hand-held wireless communication device to text or dial – you can only touch a device to call 911 in an emergency
- use a hand-held electronic entertainment device, such as a tablet or portable gaming console
- view display screens unrelated to driving, such as watching a video
- program a GPS device, except by voice commands

You are allowed to use hands-free wireless communications devices with an earpiece, lapel button or Bluetooth. You can view GPS display screens as long as they are built into your vehicle's dashboard or securely mounted on the dashboard.

Other actions such as eating, drinking, grooming, smoking, reading and reaching for objects are not part of Ontario's distracted driving law. However, you can still be charged with careless or dangerous driving.

#### **Distracted driving statistics**

In Ontario, deaths from collisions caused by distracted driving have doubled since 2000.

Ontario data on collisions from 2013 show:

- one person is injured in a distracted-driving collision every half hour
- a driver using a phone is four times more likely to crash than a driver focusing on the road

#### **Penalties for distracted driving**

The easiest way to avoid penalties for distracted driving is to not use a hand-held device when you're behind the wheel.

It's against the law to use **hand-held** communication (e.g. your phone) and electronic entertainment devices (e.g. DVD player, e-reader) while driving.

In fact, simply holding a phone or other device while driving is against the law.

You can use:

- a **hands-free** device (e.g. Bluetooth) but only to turn it on and off
- a **mounted device** (e.g. phone, GPS) as long as it is secure – not moving around while driving

If convicted, the penalty you face depends on the kind of licence you hold and how long you've been driving.

### **Drivers with A to G licences**

If you have an A, B, C, D, E, F, G and/or M licence, you'll face bigger penalties when convicted of distracted driving:

- First conviction:
  - a fine of \$615, if settled out of court (includes a victim surcharge and the court fee)
  - a fine of up to \$1,000 if a summons is received or if you fight the ticket in court and lose
  - three demerit points
  - 3-day suspension
- Second conviction
  - a fine of \$615, if settled out of court (includes a victim surcharge and the court fee)
  - a fine of up to \$2,000 if a summons is received or if you fight the ticket in court and lose
  - six demerit points
  - 7-day suspension
- Third and any further conviction(s)
  - a fine of \$615, if settled out of court (includes a victim surcharge and the court fee)

- a fine of up to \$3,000 if a summons is received or if you fight the ticket in court and lose
- six demerit points
- 30-day suspension

### **Novice drivers**

If you hold a G1, G2, M1 or M2 licence, and are convicted of distracted driving, you'll face the same fines as drivers with A to G licences. But you won't receive any demerit points.

Instead of demerit points you'll face longer suspensions:

- a 30-day licence suspension for a first conviction
- a 90-day licence suspension for a second conviction
- cancellation of your licence and removal from the Graduated Licensing System (GLS) for a third conviction
  - to get your licence back you'd have to redo the GLS program

source: [Ontario.ca-What counts as distracted driving](#)

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