

Thunder Bay

# Ontario's new distracted driving law to start in 2019

New distracted driving law starts January 1, is a part of Ontario's Bill 174 cannabis legislation

CBC News · Posted: Nov 22, 2018 2:53 PM EST | Last Updated: November 25, 2018



Distracted driving changes made under the Ontario cannabis legislation will come into effect on January 1, 2019. (Getty Images)

---

A section of the Ontario cannabis legislation, which was passed in 2017, is expected to affect drivers in the province starting on January 1, 2019, according to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO).

On December 12, 2017, Ontario passed Bill 174, which regulates the sale of recreational marijuana in the province, following its legalization across Canada.

According to a written email from MTO officials, the distracted driving changes made under the *Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act* will come into effect in the new year to "strengthen the existing road safety laws."

Drivers who are caught talking on their phones, texting, dialing or emailing using a hand-held device, such as a cell phone and other entertainment devices will be fined up to \$1,000 with a three-day licence suspension and three demerit points.

"Safety is our top priority," stated Jeff Yurek, Ontario's minister of transportation, stated in a email to CBC News on Thursday, explaining the legislation "allows the province to address unsafe driving behaviours, including careless driving and impaired driving with tough new rules and penalties that will help improve road safety."

Drivers with more than one distracted driving conviction will face a fine of up to \$2,000, a seven-day licence suspension and six demerit points, while motorists who have been caught driving distracted more than two times will pay a fine of up to \$3,000 and lose their license for 30 days.

"Ontario's roads are among the safest in North America, but we also know distracted driving continues to be a serious issue," Yurek said.

Once the new legislation, passed under the previous Liberal government, takes effect, "Ontario will have the toughest penalties for repeat distracted driving convictions."