



City of Cambridge Police Department

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INFO: Safe Driving Law, Effective September 30, 2010

September 30, 2010 – Effective September 30, 2010, the new Safe Driving Law affects motorists in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Cambridge Police Department would like to update drivers and the public about what the law states and the penalties associated with breaking this law.

Commissioner Robert C. Haas believes, “Without question there are motor vehicle accidents that occur in this city due to drivers being distracted while texting or talking on their cell phones. The Cambridge Police Department will enforce the new Safe Driving Law and ask citizens to adhere to the law as we believe it will do a great deal to mitigate many avoidable traffic accidents.”

The Safe Driving Law states:

1. Sending/Receiving/Reading Text Messages While Driving
 - Drivers may not “use a mobile telephone, or any handheld device capable of accessing the internet, to manually compose, send or read an electronic message while operating a motor vehicle.”
 - An operator shall not be considered to be operating a motor vehicle if the vehicle is stationary and not located in part of the public way intended for travel.
 - Penalties:
 - (1) First offense: fine of \$100;
 - (2) Second offense: fine of \$250;
 - (3) Third or subsequent offense: fine of \$500.

2. Use of a Mobile Phone by a Junior Operator
 - Drivers under age 18 may not use a mobile telephone, hands-free mobile telephone or mobile electronic device while operating a motor vehicle on any public way.
 - Exception: If the mobile telephone is used to report an emergency, as defined below:
 - (1) that the motor vehicle was disabled;
 - (2) that medical attention or assistance was required;

- (3) that police intervention, fire department or other emergency service was necessary for the personal safety of the operator or a passenger; or
 - (4) that a disabled vehicle or an accident was present in the public way.
- A “junior operator” shall not be considered to be operating a motor vehicle if the vehicle is stationary *and* not located in a part of the public way intended for travel.
- Penalties:
 - (1) First offense: fine of \$100; and license/permit suspended for 60 days (first offense), and reinstatement contingent upon completion of driver education program;
 - (2) Second offense: fine of \$250; and license/permit suspended for 180 days;
 - (3) Third or subsequent offense: fine of \$500, license/permit suspended for one year.
- 3. Use of mobile telephone by operator of public transportation vehicle
 - No operator of a vehicle used in public transportation (including a train, passenger bus, school bus, etc) shall use a mobile telephone, hands-free mobile telephone or other mobile device while operating such vehicle except in the performance of official duties (which must be in conformance with official written guidelines issued by the public entity).
 - Violation is punishable by a \$500 fine
 - Exception: Use of mobile telephone was required to report an emergency, as defined below:
 - (1) that the motor vehicle was disabled;
 - (2) that medical attention or assistance was required;
 - (3) that police intervention, fire department or other emergency service was necessary for the personal safety of the operator or a passenger; or
 - (4) that a disabled vehicle or an accident was present in the public way.

Please note that the Cambridge Police Department will strictly enforce this law beginning on September 30, 2010 so please drive safe and obey all traffic laws!