



As of September 1st, 2017, texting and driving is illegal in Texas!

Governor Greg Abbott signed House Bill 62 into law, making Texas the 47th state to officially ban the dangerous practice of texting while driving. At least 45 cities have also enacted hands-free ordinances.

Beginning on **Friday September 1st**, texting while driving within the state of Texas will be punishable by a fine of **\$25-99 for first-time offenders**, and **\$100-200 for repeat offenders** (though no points will be assigned). The new law also states that if an accident caused by texting and driving results in the death or serious bodily injury of another person, they can be charged with a **Class A misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$4,000** and confinement in **jail for a term not to exceed one year** (in addition to any other charges/punishments).

This new law only addresses **“reading, writing, or sending electronic messages”** via a **“wireless communication device.”** It is still legal for motorists in most cities to use their phone for GPS navigation, music apps, dialing phone numbers, etc., but drivers may still get pulled over if an officer suspects them of texting.

While the law includes a provision to preempt local texting-and-driving ordinances which already existed in over 100 cities, it does not address stricter cell phone bans (i.e., hands-free laws) put in place by at least 45 other Texas cities such as Austin, San Antonio, Denton, and El Paso. This law also does not prevent cities from enacting new local ordinances regarding hands free devices, so stay informed about new city ordinances that may be passed in your area in the near future.

Additionally, Texas forbids drivers from using hand-held communication devices (phones) in school zones, and Texas law states that school bus drivers and all drivers under 18 must refrain from texting or making telephone calls while driving—even with a hands-free device.

Please drive safe and arrive alive!

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