



Distracted Driving 101

The Niagara Regional Police Service has recently held traffic enforcement campaigns specifically to address the issue of distracted drivers. Drivers can often be seen using cell phones and other electronic hand held devices while they are driving, drawing their attention away from driving and increasing the chances of a collision.

Some people, when stopped by police claim an ignorance of the law or exactly how it applies to them. The following information is provided as an educational reminder to all drivers.

1 – A Hand Held Device is: cell phones, iPhones, iPods, all telecommunication devices and all entertainment/gaming devices. If you can use it to call, text, read, communicate with anyone, if it has buttons, a screen, takes a picture, takes a video, or does anything else you should NOT use it while you're driving. In other words, any device whose primary use is not related to the safe operation of the vehicle.

2 – Hand free use is acceptable. 'Hands-free' use means that apart from activating or deactivating the device, it is not held during use and the driver is not physically interacting with or manipulating it.

3 – To use your hand held device pull over and make sure that:

- Your vehicle is off the roadway or is lawfully parked on the roadway (that means safely on the shoulder)
- Your vehicle is not in motion. (Put it in park!)
- Your vehicle is not impeding traffic. (Don't be in anybody's way.)

Distracted Driving Consequences!

The biggest deterrent for distracted driving should be that a distracted driver is four times more likely to get into an accident, which means they are four times more likely to hurt or kill someone. Yet people still talk on their phone or text while they drive. So what is the cost of

using a hand held device while you drive? \$280 ticket. If you contest the ticket, the court may set a fine of up to \$500.

Drivers who endanger others because of distracted driving can also be charged with careless driving and automatically receive 6 demerit points, fines of up to \$2000 and/or 6 months in jail. You can even have your licence suspended for up to 2 years. With those penalties no one is 'JK' or 'LOL'.

It's just not worth it.

Remember: Drive Now, Talk & Text Later!

For more information on Distracted Driving in Ontario go to [Visit the Ministry of Transportation website for more information on distracted driving.](#)