

Ban on Texting While Driving

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By *James J. Franklin*

On November 9, 2011, Governor Tom Corbett signed Senate Bill 314 into law, which bans texting while driving on all Pennsylvania roadways effective March 9, 2012. The law prohibits drivers from using cell phones, PDAs, laptops, and similar devices while driving to send or receive text messages, instant messages, emails, or to browse the internet. A violation is a primary offense, meaning a law enforcement officer may stop a driver for texting while driving, even if the driver is doing nothing else illegal. Law enforcement, however, may not seize a driver's cell phone to prove a violation of the texting ban. A violation will result in a fine of \$50, plus costs, which will take the total penalty well over \$100. Once it takes effect in March 2012, the law will preempt all municipal and city ordinances regulating the use of cell phones while driving. The law does not prohibit talking on a cell phone while driving.

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