This page was exported from - Caledon Citizen
Export date: Fri Mar 29 10:36:17 2024 / +0000 GMT

New fines for distracted driving

by SYLVIA JONES

Using your phone while driving, typing into a GPS, reading and eating while driving can cause accidents. Since 2000, deaths from resulting car accidents caused by distracted driving have doubled. Data from 2013 shows that a driver that uses a phone is four times more likely to get into a car crash.

To be clear, holding a digital device while driving is illegal. It is against the law to use a handheld device while driving.

People with A to G licenses face penalties for distracted driving. The first conviction carries a fine of up to $1,000, three demerit points and a three-day licence suspension. The second conviction carries a fine of up to $2,000, six demerit points and a seven-day licence suspension. The third and further convictions carry a fine of up to $3,000, six demerit points and a 30-day licence suspension.

Distracted drivers can face additional penalties for endangering other people on the roadways. Drivers can face a license suspension of a maximum of two years, six demerit points, a six month prison term and fines of up to $2,000 for careless driving. Additionally, drivers can be charged with dangerous driving for causing bodily harm or death. This carries a maximum of 10 years in prison for causing bodily harm or a maximum of 14 years for causing death.

You can avoid distracted driving by turning off your phone or putting it on silent mode before driving. Additionally, you can record a message that tells callers that you are driving and that you will call them back after driving. There are mobile apps that block texts and calls, and send automatic replies to people saying that you are driving. You can also silence notifications on your phone before driving. Drivers can also use hands-free communication devices in their cars to prevent distracted driving.

Distracted driving must stop if we want to make our communities safer.

One person is hurt in a distracted driving accident every 30 minutes based on data from 2013. Distracted driving puts individuals and children at risk across Ontario.

The Dufferin County OPP participated in a distracted driving blitz during March 12th to 18th last year. They issued 13 tickets for distracted driving and issued three careless driving charges in Dufferin County. In Ontario, 631 people were charged by the OPP with distracted driving during this same time period.

According to the OPP in Caledon during 2017, 541 people were charged with distracted driving. In 2018, that number increased to 833 people charged with distracted driving in Caledon.

Our government wants to improve the safety of the roadways across Ontario. Penalties for distracted driving will discourage people from picking up their devices when they are behind the wheel.

If you have any questions regarding distracted driving penalties please contact my office at Sylvia.jonesco@pc.ola.org or call 1-800-265-1603.