

Increased penalties for handheld devices

From the Desk of Inspector Tim Melanson,
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No person shall drive a motor vehicle on a highway while holding or using a hand-held wireless communication device or other device that is capable of receiving, transmitting telephone communication, electronic data, mail or text messages.

This means the driver of a motor vehicle cannot talk, text, read or listen to messages while holding the device in his or her hand. The device must be secured to the car by some means or wireless technology must be used. GPS units or entertainment devices such as an i-Pod must also be securely mounted.

Once mounted and properly secured, all devices may be used, however, no programming of the device is allowed. You cannot answer your phone and then pull over.

You can use your device when the vehicle is off the roadway or is lawfully parked on the roadway (this does not mean that you are stopped at the traffic lights or stop sign or in heavy traffic); the vehicle is not in motion; the vehicle is not impeding traffic.

Fine Structure

The set fines for the offences are \$225, plus victim surcharge and court costs. The total payable amount is \$280 for each of the following offences under the Highway Traffic Act of Ontario effective March 18 ? Driving a motor vehicle with a display screen visible to driver; and driving a motor vehicle while holding or using a hand-held communication device.