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Columbus Police Ready To Ticket Texting Drivers

Wednesday, May 5, 2010 6:50 PM

VIDEO

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COLUMBUS, Ohio — Police on Wednesday had a new law to enforce, with the enactment of the city's texting ban.

For passengers, it is still OK to text, but if you are behind the wheel, police say the phone better be put away, 10TV's Jeff Hogan reported.

So how will police enforce the ban?

"You need probable cause to believe that they were in fact texting," said Columbus police Sgt. Rich Weiner. "If they can articulate that you were texting, then they can write you a citation."

That cause can be determined by an officer seeing a driver looking down, a vehicle swerving, or changing lanes without signaling.

A citation results in a \$150 fine and because it is now a "primary" offence, officers do not need any other reason to pull you over, Hogan reported.

"You have the right to go to court," Weiner said. "You can pay the fine or you can go to court. If you go to court you go in front of a judge and jury and you can confront the officer."

Drivers said they are aware of the ban and the dangers associated with texting while driving.

"A lot of phones now are touch and so you physically have to be looking at you phone in order to know what buttons you're pushing," said motorist Frannie Warren.

Police said the ban will hopefully help cut down on wrecks.

"If someone was to get in a car accident and they were to find out that the cause of the accident was because of somebody text messaging, then I feel like that person should get a ticket for that," said motorist Faraz Ahmed.

Police said in the event of a serious crash, they could obtain a search warrant for driver's phone records to see exactly when someone received or sent a text message.

"If they can determine that there was texting involved, that information can be used possibly in a civil suit later on," Weiner said.

Police said there will be no grace period for enforcing the law, and if they see someone texting while driving, they will write a ticket.

Watch 10TV News HD and refresh 10TV.com for additional information.

Previous Stories:

- May 5, 2010: [Texting Ban: Columbus Begins Enforcement Today](#)
- April 5, 2010: [Columbus City Council Passes Banning Texting While Driving](#)
- March 4, 2010: [Columbus Could Ban Texting While Driving](#)



The statute is a primary offense, meaning unlike seat-belt enforcement, authorities can pull a driver over if there is suspicion they are texting.



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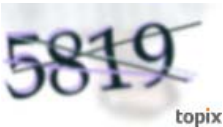
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