

# Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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## Ban on texting while driving takes effect December 1

A new state law takes effect tomorrow (December 1, 2010) that bans texting while driving in Wisconsin.

The law makes it illegal to drive “any motor vehicle while composing or sending an electronic text message or an electronic mail message.” A citation for violating this law may cost drivers up to \$400 along with four demerit points added on their license.

Wisconsin is now one of 30 states and the District of Columbia that ban texting on a cell phone or similar electronic device while driving. Wisconsin’s texting ban is a primary enforcement law, which means law enforcement officers may stop motorists suspected of this offense alone.

“All law enforcement officers hope that drivers realize the extreme danger of texting while driving and voluntarily comply with this new law. But if they don’t, we’re ready to take appropriate enforcement actions to prevent them from killing and injuring themselves and others,” said Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent David Collins.

According to Collins, all forms of distracted driving are dangerous. However, texting while behind the wheel is especially hazardous because the driver’s eyes, hands and mental focus are all diverted from the safe operation of the vehicle.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration attributed an estimated 6,000 traffic deaths and one-half million injuries to distracted driving in 2008.

“Every time you drive, you are legally and morally responsible for safely operating a potentially destructive—and even deadly—force” Collins said. “That’s why driving requires your undivided attention. Any lapse in attention to traffic or road conditions is a grave danger to you, your passengers and everyone else on the road. No attempt to multi-task in your vehicle, no phone call, and no text message is more important than a human life.”

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Note: View this document on the Web at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/news/index.htm>.