

Pennsylvania Enacts an Updated Distracting Driving Law to Prohibit the Use of Handheld Devices While Driving

Governor Josh Shapiro signed into law Act 18 of 2024, which bans the use of handheld cell phones while driving. This ban follows a previous one that prohibited texting while driving.

Except for a few limited exemptions, such as an emergency call to law enforcement or other emergency services, the law prohibits a driver from using an interactive mobile device while driving. “Use of an interactive mobile device” includes the following:

1. Using at least one hand to hold, or supporting with another part of the body, an interactive mobile device.
2. Dialing or answering an interactive mobile device by pressing more than a single button.
3. Reaching for an interactive mobile device in a manner that requires a driver to maneuver so that the driver is no longer in a seated driving position, restrained by a seat belt.

A violation of this law is a summary offense and carries a fine of \$50. A violation is a Primary Offense meaning a law enforcement officer can stop a violator for solely this offense.

Act 18 includes multiple effective dates.

1. Beginning June 5, 2025, police can begin to issue warnings for violations of the law.
2. Beginning June 5, 2026, police can begin to issue citations for violations of the law.

Act 14 basically states that you cannot touch your phone while you are operating a vehicle, but you can use it by Bluetooth ONLY.

Between the signing of the legislation into law on June 5, until June 5 of 2025, there is to be public education outreach occurring so that the public is aware that touching your phone while driving is a violation.

By signing the legislation that became Act 14, Pennsylvania became the 29th state to ban handheld devices while driving.