

Provided by: Brier Grieves Agency

Cellphone Use While Driving Laws by State

State	Hand-held ban	Young drivers all cellphone ban	Bus drivers all cellphone ban	Texting ban	Enforcement
Alabama	no	16-year-old drivers; 17-year-old drivers who have held an intermediate license for fewer than 6 months	no	all drivers	primary
Alaska	no	no	no	all drivers	primary
Arizona	no	learner's permit holders and intermediate license holders during the first 6 months after licensing (effective 06/30/18)	school bus drivers	no	secondary (effective 06/30/18)
Arkansas	drivers 18 or older but younger than 21; school and highway work zones	drivers younger than 18	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary: texting by all drivers and cellphone use by school bus drivers; secondary: cellphone use by young drivers, drivers in school and work zones ¹
California	all drivers	drivers younger than 18	school and transit bus drivers	all drivers ²	primary: hand-held and texting by drivers 18 and older; secondary: drivers younger than 18 ¹
Colorado	no	drivers younger than 18	no	all drivers	primary
Connecticut	all drivers	drivers younger than 18	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
Delaware	all drivers	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
District of Columbia	all drivers	learner's permit holders	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
Florida	no	no	no	all drivers	secondary

State	Hand-held ban	Young drivers all cellphone ban	Bus drivers all cellphone ban	Texting ban	Enforcement
Georgia	all drivers (effective July 1, 2018)	drivers younger than 18	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
Hawaii	all drivers	drivers younger than 18	no	all drivers	primary
Idaho	no	no	no	all drivers	primary
Illinois	all drivers	drivers younger than 19 and learner's permit holders younger than 19	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
Indiana	no	drivers younger than 21	no	all drivers	primary
Iowa	no	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	no	all drivers	primary
Kansas	no	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	no	all drivers	primary
Kentucky	no	drivers younger than 18	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
Louisiana	drivers in signed school zones; with respect to novice drivers, see footnote 3	all novice drivers, see footnote 3 for detail	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary ³
Maine⁴	no	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	no	all drivers	primary
Maryland	all drivers	drivers younger than 18	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
Massachusetts	no	drivers younger than 18	school bus drivers and passenger bus drivers	all drivers	primary

State	Hand-held ban	Young drivers all cellphone ban	Bus drivers all cellphone ban	Texting ban	Enforcement
Michigan	No	learner's permit and intermediate license holders (level 1 and 2); integrated voice-operated systems excepted	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
Minnesota	no	learner's permit holders and provisional license holders during the first 12 months after licensing	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
Mississippi	no	no	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
Missouri	no	no	no	drivers 21 and younger	primary
Montana	no	no	no	no	not applicable
Nebraska	no	learner's permit and intermediate license holders younger than 18	no	all drivers	secondary
Nevada	all drivers	no	no	all drivers	primary
New Hampshire	All drivers	drivers younger than 18	no	all drivers	primary
New Jersey	all drivers	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
New Mexico	no	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	no	all drivers	primary
New York	all drivers	no	no	all drivers	primary
North Carolina	no	drivers younger than 18	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary

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North Dakota	no	drivers younger than 18	no	all drivers	primary
Ohio	no	drivers younger than 18	no	all drivers	primary for drivers younger than 18; secondary for texting
Oklahoma	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	no ⁵	no	all drivers	primary
Oregon	all drivers ⁶	drivers younger than 18	no	all drivers	primary
Pennsylvania	no	no	no	all drivers	primary
Rhode Island	all drivers (effective 06/01/18)	drivers younger than 18	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
South Carolina	no	no	no	all drivers	primary
South Dakota	no	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	no	all drivers	secondary
Tennessee	drivers in marked school zones (effective 01/01/18)	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary
Texas	drivers in school crossing zones and on public school property during the time the reduced speed limit applies	drivers younger than 18	bus drivers when a passenger 17 and younger is present	all drivers (effective 09/01/17)	primary
Utah	no ⁷	drivers younger than 18	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary: texting; secondary: talking on handheld phone

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Vermont	all drivers	drivers younger than 18	no	all drivers	primary
Virginia	no	drivers younger than 18	school bus drivers	all drivers	primary; secondary for drivers younger than 18
Washington	all drivers ⁷	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	no	all drivers ⁷	primary
West Virginia	all drivers	drivers younger than 18 who hold either a learner's permit or an intermediate license	no	all drivers	primary
Wisconsin	drivers in highway construction areas	learner's permit and intermediate license holders	no	all drivers	primary
Wyoming	no	no	no	all drivers	primary

¹ The laws in Arkansas and California prohibit police from stopping a vehicle to determine if a driver is in compliance with the law. The language prohibits the use of checkpoints to enforce the law, but it has been interpreted as the functional equivalent of secondary provisions that typically state the officer may not stop someone suspected of a violation unless there is other, independent, cause for a stop.

²California drivers older than 18 may dictate, send or listen to text-based messages if they're using voice-activated, hands-free devices.

³In Louisiana, all learner's permit holders, irrespective of age, and all intermediate license holders are prohibited from driving while using a hand-held cellphone. All drivers younger than 18 are prohibited from using any cellphone. All drivers, irrespective of age, issued a first driver's license are prohibited from using a cellphone for one year. The cellphone ban is secondary for novice drivers ages 18 and older.

⁴Maine has a law that makes driving while distracted a traffic infraction.

⁵In Oklahoma, learner's permit and intermediate license holders are banned from using a hand-held electronic device while operating a motor vehicle except in life-threatening emergencies.

⁶ In Oregon, drivers may not hold a personal electronic device in either hand or both hands while operating a motor vehicle on a public highway, including while temporarily stationary because of traffic, a traffic control device, or other momentary delays, effective October 1, 2017.

⁷ Utah considers speaking on a cell phone, without a hands-free device, to be an offense only if a driver is also committing some other moving violation (other than speeding).

⁸ In Washington, drivers may not hold a personal electronic device in either hand or both hands while operating a motor vehicle on a public highway, including while temporarily stationary because of traffic, a traffic control device, or other momentary delays, effective July 23, 2017.

Sources: IIHS.org; Governors Highway Safety Association. Legislation is continually changing. Therefore, this information is not intended to be exhaustive nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as legal advice. Readers should contact appropriate legal counsel for advice. Updated September, 2016.

