

Overview of New Transportation Safety Laws in Pennsylvania

Anti-Texting Law Facts for Pennsylvania

What the law does:

- ◆ The law prohibits, as a primary offense, any driver from using an Interactive Wireless Communication Device (IWCD) to send, read or write a text-based communication while the vehicle is in motion
- ◆ Defines an IWCD as a wireless phone, personal digital assistant, smart phone, portable or mobile computer or similar devices that can be used for texting, instant messaging, emailing or browsing the Internet.
- ◆ Defines a text-based communication as a text message, instant message, email or other written communication composed or received on an IWCD.
- ◆ Institutes a fine of \$50 for convictions.
- ◆ Makes clear that this law supersedes and preempts any local ordinances restricting the use of interactive wireless communication devices by drivers.
- ◆ The penalty is a summary offense. The law does not authorize seizure of an IWCD.
- ◆ The law goes into effect March 8, 2012.



The texting ban does NOT include the use of GPS devices, a system or device that is physically or electronically integrated into the vehicle, or a communications device that is affixed to a mass transit vehicle, bus or school bus.

Act 81 of 2011 : Changes Affecting Graduated Driver Licensing and Passenger Restraint Laws

The new rules in Act 81 of 2011 take effect on December 24, 2011. The changes to the law were initiated to help junior drivers receive more comprehensive training, ease young driver distractions through limiting the number of passengers they may carry and improve general highway safety through improvements to passenger restraint laws.

Changes to Seat Belt Requirements

Drivers and occupants in a vehicle who are under the age of 18 must wear a properly adjusted and fastened seat belt, and children under the age of eight must be securely fastened in a child restraint system. Failure to comply with the new law's seat belt provisions is a primary offense, meaning that a driver can be pulled over and cited solely for that violation.



New Primary Booster Law (Act 81, 2011)

All drivers transporting children 4 years of age or older but under 8 years of age are responsible to securely restrain those children in a seat belt system and an appropriately fitting child booster seat (Primary Law)

- ◆ Violators may be stopped as a primary offense for non-compliance of the Child Protection Law for children age 4 to age 8. Violators will be fined \$75.00, plus Court Costs (adjusted annually); \$30.00 MCARE; \$10.00 EMS Fund and \$10.00 Administrative Costs.
- ◆ The fine shall be dismissed if the person prior to or at his hearing displays evidence of acquisition of a child passenger restraint system/booster. Evidence shall include a receipt to the appropriate court officer, which evidences purchase, rental, transferal from another child seat owner (by notarized letter) or bailment from a bona fide child seat loaner program.



Ready to graduate to a booster seat?

If your child has reached the maximum weight or height limit of his/her forward facing child safety seat, then you will want to consider a booster seat.

Once children outgrow their forward-facing child safety seat, secure them in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle lap and shoulder belt fits properly, typically when the child is approximately 4 feet 9 inches and between 8 and 12 years of age. All children under age 13 should ride in a back seat.

Ready to graduate to a seat belt?

Safety belts are made for adults. When children outgrow their belt-positioning booster seat secure them in a properly fitted lap and shoulder belt. A lap and shoulder belt fits properly when the lap belt lays low and snug across the hips/upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the center of the chest and shoulder. All children under age 13 should ride in a back seat.

The Lap and Shoulder Seat Belt should always be used for optimal protection. All children under age 13 should ride in a back seat.

If you are wondering if your child can graduate from a booster seat and fit in a safety belt, try this 5-step step. You must be able to answer yes to each of the following 5 questions before your child is ready to get out of a booster seat.

The 5-Step Safety Belt Test

1. Does the child sit all the way back, with the child's back against the vehicle seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the front edge of the vehicle seat?
3. Does the shoulder belt cross the center of the chest and shoulder, not across the neck or off the shoulder?
4. Does the lap belt cross the hips, low and snug touching the child's upper thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the entire trip?