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**Governor**  
**Deval Patrick**in Governor's  
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SEARCH

The Administration	Constituent Services	Press Office	Agenda	Legislation & Executive Orders	Get Involved	
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[Home](#) > [Press Office](#) > [Press Releases](#) >DEVAL L. PATRICK  
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For Immediate release - July 02, 2010

**Governor Patrick Signs Safe Driving Legislation****New law bans texting while driving for all drivers and cell phone-use by junior operators; Massachusetts one of 29 states to prohibit Dangerous behavior behind the wheel**

BOSTON - Friday, July 2, 2010 - Continuing the Patrick-Murray Administration's commitment to improving public safety on the state's roadways, Governor Deval Patrick today signed legislation that bans text-messaging for all Massachusetts drivers, prohibits junior operators from using cell phones and institutes new license renewal procedures for mature drivers, among other provisions.

"Without question, this new law will save lives on our roadways," said Governor Patrick. "Texting is one of the riskiest distractions that endangers public safety and today we are joining other states by saying it will no longer be tolerated."

"We are focused on delivering high quality public safety for all residents of the Commonwealth, and this new enforcement will make our roads safer for all drivers," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray.

"Texting while driving has become a serious threat to the safety of our roads and drivers," House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo said. "We have taken strong action to keep our roads safe by banning texting while driving and instituting needed measures to keep impaired drivers off the road. Protecting the safety of our residents is our most important task as elected officials and this bill will do just that."

"This is a big step in fighting the deadly consequences of driving distracted," said Transportation Secretary and CEO Jeffrey B. Mullan. "Eliminating texting while driving is a priority for national transportation leaders and Massachusetts and I'm proud to say the Commonwealth has joined this public safety campaign."

Under the new law which takes effect in October, any driver caught composing or reading a text message can be cited and fined \$100. Operators of public transportation vehicles who violate the ban will be subject to a \$500 fine. Law enforcement will have the authority to stop any driver suspected of texting. However, the offense will not be considered a moving violation and will not be subject to an insurance surcharge.

Drivers under 18 cited for using any type of cell phone or mobile electronic device with or without a hands-free feature will be subject to a \$100 fine and a 60-day suspension of their driver's license. Offenders will also have to complete a driver attitudinal course before their license is reinstated. Massachusetts is the 29th state to ban dangerous driving behavior.

"By making texting and the use of mobile devices a primary enforcement, this gives us more tools in our arsenal to protect drivers who use our roads, particularly young and inexperienced drivers who are the most likely to get into a crash," said RMV Registrar Rachel Kaprielian.

"This bill sends a clear message to all drivers, regardless of age, that when behind the wheel, your primary focus should be driving," said Senator Steven A. Baddour, Senate Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation. "This is a major step forward to ensure the continued safety of the motoring public."

"This is a step in the right direction to making our roads safer," said Senator Stephen Brewer. "I think this is a great, commonsense bill that will prevent needless tragedies and makes a strong statement that we will not tolerate distracted or dangerous driving."

"As a medical professional and a legislator, I am so pleased that the Safe Driving Bill will finally become law in the Commonwealth and includes strengthening our medical reporting system, which for the first time in Massachusetts will identify functional and cognitive changes in individuals," said Representative Kay Khan. "I believe this is a good first step to improving the safety of our

roads."

The MassDOT Registry of Motor Vehicles will also require any driver age 75 or older to renew their license in person at an RMV branch or office location and undergo a vision test every five years. The division will also develop standards to help law enforcement, health care providers and families better assess a driver's ability to handle a vehicle safely.

Additionally, under the new law, any driver who accrues three or more surchargeable incidents within a two year period will be required to take a driver retraining and safety course or face the suspension of their license.

This comprehensive legislation is the result of significant input and support from advocates for safe roads and safe driving including AAA, Safe Roads Alliance, and members of the Safe Roads Now Coalition, along with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and other elder services advocates.

"Texting is the most dangerous form of distracted driving, and a ban on texting while driving will protect all motorists in the Commonwealth. We believe this new law is a powerful step in the right direction when it comes to public safety," said Mark Shaw, President and CEO of AAA Southern New England.

"This bill will save lives in Massachusetts," said Jeff Larason, President of Safe Roads Alliance. "We need to keep up with the technology that is causing such great distraction for drivers. This bill goes a long way to accomplishing that goal."

"AARP commends state leaders for taking important steps toward improving road safety in the Commonwealth," said Linda Fitzgerald, AARP Massachusetts state president. "While not perfect, we believe this new law will help make the roads safer for everyone, AARP's goal all along. It contains major provisions that AARP advocated for to identify impaired drivers and get them off the road, in particular, a strengthened medical reporting system and tightened accident-related trigger system. We will now work to educate our more than 800,000 members in the BayState about the new law and how it will affect them."

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