

A Message from Your Police Department



On April 4, 2023, Ohio's new distracted driving law took effect. It's now a primary offense to use a mobile phone or electronic device while driving, which means law enforcement officers can stop you solely for this violation.



OHIO LAW

The new distracted driving law can be found in **Section 4511.204 of the Ohio Revised Code**.

This law is meant to reduce the number of crashes and deaths caused by distracted driving. So please, do not text, watch videos and/or do anything that takes your eyes off the road while driving.

It's not only illegal, but it's also dangerous.

WHAT IS ALLOWED???

Drivers over the age of 18 can make or receive calls via hands-free devices, including:

- Speakerphone
- Earpiece
- Wireless headset
- Electronic watch
- Connecting phone to vehicle

In most cases, anything more than a **single touch or swipe** is against the law!

CAN I STILL USE BLUETOOTH???

This new law allows drivers over age 18 to make or receive phone calls using “**hands-free**” technology such as Bluetooth or integrated systems within the vehicle, as long as you don't hold or support the device or manually enter letters, numbers, or symbols. If you must physically manipulate your device, you should pull over to a safe location and park your car before handling.

WHAT IS PROHIBITED???

With very few exceptions, anything that involves using, holding, or supporting a device while driving is prohibited.

Prohibited actions:

- Dialing a phone number
- Sending a text message (voice to text is legal via a "hands-free" method)
- Updating or browsing social media
- Video calls or “FaceTime”
- Browsing the Internet
- Watching videos (GPS/navigational displays are allowed)
- Playing games
- Recording or streaming video



FOR ALL EMERGENCIES CALL 911

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Drivers can listen to audio streaming apps and use navigational equipment if they turn them on before getting on the road or use a single touch or swipe to activate, modify, or deactivate them.

Exceptions:

- Drivers reporting an emergency to law enforcement, a hospital, a health care provider, a fire department, or a similar emergency entity.
- Drivers holding a phone to their ear only during phone conversations (if the call is started or stopped with a single touch or swipe).
- Drivers holding or using cell phones and other electronic devices while stopped at a traffic light or parked on a road or highway during an emergency or road closure.
- First responders (law enforcement, fire, EMS), using electronic devices as part of their official duties.
- Utility workers operating utility vehicles in certain emergency or outage situations.
- Licensed operators using an amateur radio.
- Commercial truck drivers using a mobile data terminal

ENFORCEMENT

With the new law April 4, 2023, Cuyahoga Heights Patrol Officers will issue written warnings for the next six (6) months for violations as part of the effort to educate and help motorists adapt to the new law.

Beginning **October 5, 2023**, citations will be issued for any motorists violating this law.

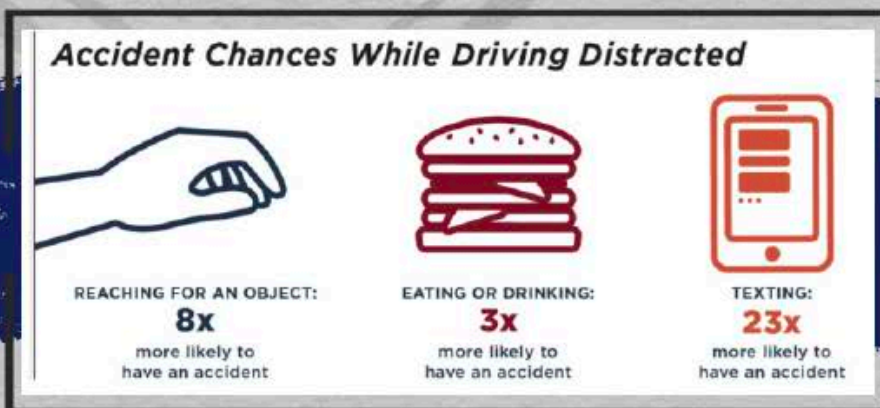
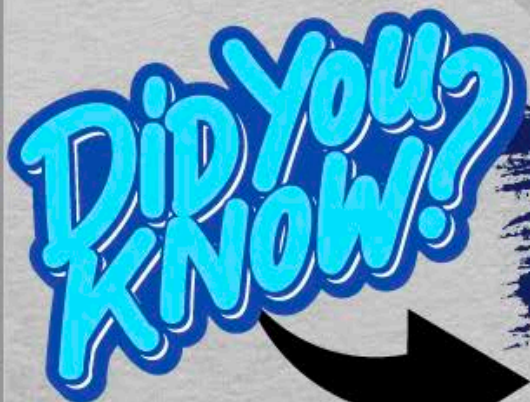
Penalties:

- **1st offense in two years:** 2-points assessed to driver's license, up to a \$150 fine.*
- **2nd offense in two years:** 3-points assessed to license, up to a \$250 fine.
- **3rd or more offense in two years:** 4-points assessed to license, up to a \$500 fine, a possible 90-day suspension of driver's license.
- **Fines are doubled if the violation occurs in a work zone.**

For more information, please visit the following web sites:

<https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/phonesdown>

<https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-4511.204/4-4-2023>





Heroes Helping Those With Special Needs

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the fastest growing developmental disabilities in our world today. According to the CDC, 1 in 36 children in the U.S. are affected by autism, facing many challenges with social and communication skills we tend to take for granted each day.

HEROES HELPING THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

This April marked World Autism Awareness month, which allows the opportunity to learn more about the disorder while giving those affected a true voice and recognition they deserve.



On Tuesday April 11, 2023, Cuyahoga Heights Patrol Officer Jim Berdysz participated in an exclusive event called “Special Needs Skating with First Responders.”

The occasion was held at United Skates of America in Wickliffe where first responders came together to roller skate alongside children with autism and special needs. The event included local area police officers from Richmond Heights, Euclid, Mentor-on-the-Lake and Cleveland Clinic.

The night was made possible through “Heroes Helping Those With Special Needs” a local non-profit organization providing safety programs for police and fire departments for people with autism and other special needs.

If you or someone you know would like to donate, please visit <https://www.heroeshelping.org/> for more information.

