

Police officers struggle to enforce distracted driving laws

Written by Australian Business

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When you get behind the wheel of your car, chances are high that one of the first things you do is buckle your seatbelt. Even if you do not drive a newer car -- in which incessant beeping will remind you if you forget to buckle up -- most people have become accustomed to taking this necessary precaution when they drive.

Experts are now suggesting that the best way to reduce distracted driving on our roads is to change people's attitudes about such behaviors -- much like what was done with seatbelt usage decades ago. Instead of focusing on new technologies marketed to limit the effect of distracted driving, motorists must begin to understand the danger they create when they participate in such activities while on the road.

Changing people's attitudes about distracted driving would also aid law enforcement officers, who reportedly find enforcing distracted driving bans to be a challenge. In certain states, all motorists have been prohibited by law from texting or talking on handheld cellphones while behind the wheel. Police officers have noted that texting bans in particular are difficult to enforce, as officers must actually observe the individual texting. Often, motorists will claim they were placing a call or merely holding their phone when faced with such charges.

Taking action to reduce the incidences of distracted driving is critical in the United States, as collisions caused by distracted drivers continue to be a serious problem. In 2011, over 3,330 people died in motor vehicle accidents caused by a driver who was distracted. During the same year, another 387,000 people sustained personal injuries as a result of a distracted driver crash. In total, 10 percent of all auto accidents that resulted in personal injuries in 2011 were caused by distracted drivers, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Follow distracted driving laws in Oklahoma

In Oklahoma, a general ban against certain distracted driving behaviors has not been enacted.

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Instead, certain groups of motorists are prohibited from engaging in some of these dangerous behaviors.

For instance, individuals with an intermediate license or a learner's permit are not allowed to use handheld cellphones while behind the wheel. In addition, these novice drivers may not send or read text messages while they are driving.

Bus drivers in Oklahoma are also banned from texting and are prohibited from using a cellphone of any type -- including those with hands-free technology -- while on the road.

If you or a loved one has been injured in a distracted driving accident, seek the advice of a knowledgeable personal injury attorney to ensure your rights are protected.