

California lawmakers seek to abolish hands-free texting for teen drivers

Written by Australian Business

September 24, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- Last year, lawmakers in California created a controversial exemption to the state's texting-while-driving prohibition. Specifically, the exemption passed was one that made it legal for drivers to text while behind the wheel as long as they were using hands-free phones to dictate and send text messages.

While debate continues to swirl around the enactment of this exemption - not to mention its potential impact on the likelihood of [California car accidents](#) - the California legislature recently passed another bill that will, once signed by the Governor, eliminate this hands-free texting option for all drivers under the age of 18-years-old.

California's recent texting-while-driving bill

Essentially, lawmakers are attempting to close a loophole that was created when the hands-free texting exemption was established last year. For instance, prior to passage of this exemption, texting while driving was completely banned for all drivers, in addition, those under the age of 18 were prohibited from talking on wireless telephones while driving, even if done in hands-free mode - meaning those under 18 could not use cellphones to text or talk while driving.

However, when the hand-free texting exemption was created last year, lawmakers neglected to mention in the law whether the hands-free texting option was limited to certain age groups. Consequently, this meant that drivers under the age of 18 could text while driving using hands-free phones, even though they still could not talk on hands-free phones. In the eyes of several lawmakers, the creation of this loophole necessitated an amendment to the law, which was rectified in the recently passed legislation.

Once signed by the Governor, [Senate Bill 194](#) will make it illegal for drivers under the age of 18 to use a wireless telephone or electronic wireless communications device while behind the wheel, regardless of whether the device is hands-free or not - effectively closing the hands-free texting loophole for teen drivers.

Texting continues to increase in California

According to a recent survey conducted by the Automobile Club for Southern California, texting while driving has actually increased 126 percent since the first statewide ban went into effect in

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2008. Sadly, this illustrates that much still needs to be done to curb this deadly epidemic. Hopefully, by again making it illegal for teen drivers to text while driving using hands-free phones the roads will become safer.

However, regardless of the impact of this new law, the recent survey indicates that careless drivers will continue to text while behind the wheel even if it is illegal. Accordingly, if a texting driver has injured you or a loved one, it is important to seek the advice of a knowledgeable car accident attorney. An experienced attorney can review the facts of your case and help determine what damages you may be entitled to following an accident.

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