

What You Need to Know about the Hands Free Georgia Act

Effective Date: July 1, 2018

The new distracted driving law, Hands Free Georgia Act (HB 673), prohibits drivers from holding or supporting a wireless telecommunication device or a stand-alone electronic device while operating a vehicle. Additionally, this measure would maintain the ban on texting, emailing and internet browsing while driving, but would also ban watching or recording videos while driving. GPS navigation and voice-to-text features would still be permitted. The law takes effect on July 1, 2018.



Drivers ARE NOT allowed to:



Physically hold or support a wireless telecommunications device (i.e. mobile phone) or a **stand-alone electronic device** (i.e. iPad, iPod, Kindle, etc.) with any part of the body; *Exceptions would be made for an earpiece, headphone device or telecommunications device worn on a wrist (i.e. smart watch).*

Write, send or read any text-based communication, including but not limited to instant message, e-mail or internet data; *Exceptions would be allowed for voice-to-text technology.*

Watch a video or movie on a wireless telecommunications device or stand-alone electronic device.

Record or broadcast a video on a wireless telecommunications device or stand-alone electronic device; *This would not apply to devices used for the sole purpose of continuously recording or broadcasting video within or outside of the motor vehicle (i.e. dash cams).*

Drivers ARE allowed to:



- Use their phone for voice communication on a hands-free basis.
- Touch their phone for dialing, receiving or ending a call as long as the driver is not holding or supporting the phone.
- Use their phone for GPS navigation apps.
- Use voice-to-text technology.

EXCEPTIONS

While reporting a traffic accident, medical emergency, fire, an actual or potential criminal or delinquent act, or road condition which causes an immediate and serious traffic or safety hazard.

By an employee or contractor of a utility services provider acting within the scope of his or her employment while responding to a utility emergency.

By a law enforcement officer, firefighter, emergency medical services personnel ambulance driver, or other similarly employed public safety first responder during the performance of his or her official duties.

While in a motor vehicle which is lawfully parked.

PENALTIES

1st Offense: \$50 fine and 1 point on license

2nd Offense: \$100 fine and 2 points on license

3rd Offense: \$150 fine and 3 points on license

**Any person appearing before a court for a first charge who produces in court a device or proof of purchase of such device that would allow such person to comply with the law in the future shall not be guilty of such offense. The court shall require the person to affirm that they have not previously utilized the privilege.*



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