

New Jersey's Cell Phone Law Starts March 1st, 2008

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Chief Paul A. Kaminsky and the Hillsborough Township Police Department Traffic Safety Bureau would like to advise residents that on March 1, 2008, New Jersey's Cell Phone Law is changing.

The new law changes the offense of talking or texting on your cell phone without a hands-free device from a Secondary Offense to a Primary Offense. As of March 1st, 2008 you can be stopped solely for this offense without having committed another motor vehicle violation.

Motorists who are summonsed for driving while using a hand-held cell phone, and plead guilty, face a \$130.00 fine. Drivers who wish to plead "not guilty" must appear in court. The Judge will hear the case and, for drivers who are found guilty, the judge will impose a fine within the statutory range, between \$100.00 and \$250.00.

Exceptions to law are; The operator has reason to fear for his/her life or safety or believes that a criminal act may be perpetrated against him/herself or another person, if the operator is reporting a crime, accident, fire, or reckless/careless driver who may be under the influence of drugs/alcohol, to the authorities.

Also exempt from the law are; law enforcement officers, fire department and emergency personnel while in the performance of their official duties.

According to the Highway Traffic Safety Administration, at least 25 percent of motor vehicle crashes on the road are due to some form of driver distraction.

A study conducted by AAA revealed that using a cell phone was number eight on a list of factors contributing to accidents, ranking behind eating, changing radio stations, and other driver distractions.