

ILLINOIS' DRIVER DISTRACTION LAWS

Effective January 1, 2010, the state of Illinois bans motorists from sending, receiving, or reading text messages, emails or instant messages on a cell phone, PDA, or computer while driving. It also prevents drivers from accessing the Internet while behind the wheel and bans cell phones while driving in school or construction zones.

With these laws, police may pull over drivers suspected of violating the law, making it a primary offense. Drivers caught violating the law may be subject to fines between \$75 and \$500.

Exceptions in which drivers would be permitted to text, include:

- In emergency situations to contact the proper authorities
- In cases where the driver is using a hands-free or voice-activated device
- When the driver is parked on the shoulder of the road
- When the driver is stopped in traffic AND has the vehicle in neutral or park

Police officers and other emergency personnel may text while driving so long as it is done while performing official duties. Commercial drivers also may read messages displayed on permanently installed communication devices in their commercial vehicles.

The bill does not prevent drivers from using GPS navigation or other devices physically or electronically integrated into their vehicles while driving.

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