

Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)

ARE THERE ANY OTHER EXCEPTIONS?

Yes.

- An operator of an authorized emergency vehicle or law enforcement vehicle using a portable electronic device while acting in an official capacity, or
- The operation of two-way mobile radio transmitters or receivers used by licensees of the Federal Communications Commission.

WHAT IS THE FINE FOR A VIOLATION?

A violation of this ordinance is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$200.

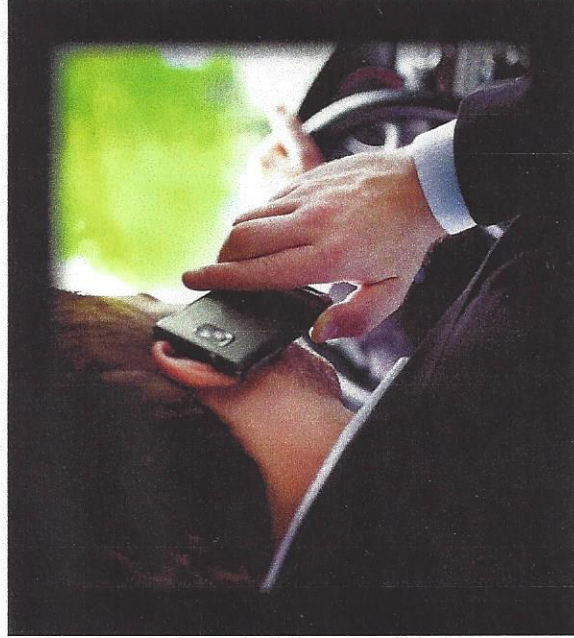


For more information, visit
www.bedfordpolice.com/distracted_driving.html
817.952.2440

Distracted Driving Ordinance

On November 18, 2014, the Bedford City Council passed an ordinance prohibiting distracted driving practices as they relate to portable electronic devices (which is defined as any handheld wireless communication device, laptop computer, tablet, media player, handheld gaming device, or any electronic device capable of displaying text-based communications, games, pictures or video).

To review the ordinance in its entirety, please visit www.bedfordpolice.com and click on 'Distracted Driving Ordinance' from the homepage.



CITY OF BEDFORD



Distracted Driving Ordinance

Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ has been compiled to assist the public in better understanding the reasoning behind the ordinance, and its applicability to motorists traveling in Bedford.

WHY DID BEDFORD FEEL IT WAS NECESSARY TO ADOPT A DISTRACTED DRIVING ORDINANCE?

Distracted driving is dangerous. A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) study found that a driver is 23 times more likely to be involved in a vehicle accident or near accident simply by looking away from the forward roadway for just two seconds. This is a risk that is comparable to driving with a Blood Alcohol Content of 0.15 (almost twice the legal limit).

A second NHTSA study indicated that the average driver's eyes are off the road while texting for five seconds. At 55 miles per hour, those five seconds equate to traveling the length of a football field while blindfolded. The same study reported that 11% of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal accidents were reported as distracted.

In 2012, there were 3,328 people killed in distracted driving accidents. While exact statistics and specifications may vary, all studies show that distracted driving – specifically the use of handheld mobile devices – poses a significant threat to the health and safety of the public.

Texting while driving is a factor in accidents leading to an average of 11 teenager deaths each day in our country.

Texting while driving is a contributing factor in nearly 25% of all vehicle accidents, leading to 1,600,000 accidents each year and 330,000 injuries.

Texas is one of only six states that currently does not have a state law prohibiting distracted driving, except under certain circumstances.

WHAT DOES THIS ORDINANCE PROHIBIT?

A person may not use a portable electronic device while operating a motor vehicle upon a public street or highway. The term "use" includes, but is not limited to:

- viewing the display screen of a portable electronic device;
- holding a portable electronic device in a position to talk into or listen;
- manipulating a portable electronic device, by interacting with its display screen or pushing any button to enter text, dial numbers, or engage in any other function.

WHAT IS THE ORDINANCE'S DEFINITION FOR A 'PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICE'?

A 'Portable Electronic Device' is defined as any handheld wireless communication device, laptop computer, tablet, media player, handheld gaming device, or any electronic device capable of displaying text-based communications, games, pictures, or video.

WHAT IS THE ORDINANCE'S DEFINITION FOR A 'HANDS-FREE DEVICE'?

A 'Hands-Free Device' shall mean speakerphone capability, cell phone attachment, or another function or other piece of equipment installed in or on a wireless communication device that allows the use of a portable electronic device without the use of the operator's hand(s), except to activate or deactivate a function of the portable electronic device or hands-free device.

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED ACTIVITY WHILE OPERATING A VEHICLE IN BEDFORD?

- Texting while driving
- Holding a cell phone in your hand in order to

talk or listen while operating a motor vehicle

- Holding a cell phone or GPS device in your hand in order to view a GPS programmed route while operating a motor vehicle.

IF I HAVE MY CELL PHONE ON SPEAKER, CAN I HAVE IT IN MY HAND WHILE OPERATING A MOTOR VEHICLE?

No.

CAN I USE MY CELL PHONE WHILE I AM STOPPED AT A SIGNAL LIGHT?

No. If you desire to use your cell phone, you must first pull out of all lanes of the roadway and stop the vehicle.

I AM USING MY CELL PHONE AS A GPS DEVICE. IS THIS PERMISSIBLE?

Yes. Provided the device functioning in a GPS capacity is affixed to the vehicle.

DOES THIS ORDINANCE RESTRICT OCCUPANTS OF A VEHICLE – OTHER THAN THE DRIVER – FROM USING ANY PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICE?

No. This ordinance places no restrictions on passengers in a motor vehicle. This ordinance only applies to an operator of a motor vehicle on a public street or highway in Bedford.

CAN I USE MY CELL PHONE WHILE DRIVING TO REPORT AN ACCIDENT OR ANOTHER TYPE OF EMERGENCY?

Yes. Provisions were written into the ordinance in order to allow for those unique circumstances involving matters of public safety, including:

- to obtain emergency assistance at a traffic accident,
- to communicate with an emergency response service, fire department, police department, hospital, health clinic, or physician's office in an attempt to prevent injury to a person or property, or
- to communicate with reasonable belief a person's life or safety is in immediate danger.