# Pennsylvania Implements Handheld Device Ban for Drivers



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**HARRISBURG, PA.** — Pennsylvania has passed a new law prohibiting drivers from using handheld devices while driving. Governor Josh Shapiro is expected to sign the bill in June 2024, with enforcement starting a year later in June 2025.

#### Law Details

Under the new law: - Drivers cannot engage in activities such as talking on handheld phones, texting, recording videos, taking pictures, playing games, sending emails, or using social media. - Texting while driving was previously banned. - Handheld devices can only be used in emergencies to contact law enforcement or emergency services.

#### Reasoning and Goals

The law aims to reduce distracted driving. State Sen. Rosemary Brown (R., Monroe), the bill’s author, states the goal is to ensure phones are not in drivers’ hands.

#### National Context

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, distracted driving resulted in 3,308 deaths in 2022, accounting for 8% of all driving fatalities.

#### Hands-Free Usage

Drivers are encouraged to use hands-free options like CarPlay to maintain focus on the road.

#### Penalties

Offenders will be fined a $50 summary offense.

#### Comparative Legislation

All neighboring states — New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Maryland, Delaware, and West Virginia — have similar bans. Nationwide, 34 states and Washington, D.C. ban handheld cellphone use for drivers.

#### Additional Provisions

* The law mandates police to report details of all traffic stops, including perceived race or ethnicity, gender, the search conducted, and stop outcomes. This measure, starting in December 2025, aims to monitor potential racial profiling.
* The law also requires education on distracted driving for learner’s permit applicants, including a relevant test question.

Pennsylvania joins several states in adopting stricter regulations on handheld device use to enhance road safety.