

News Release

Public Safety

Distracted driving ban to take effect in June

15 April 2011

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FREDERICTON (CNB) – A law that bans the use of hand-held communications and entertainment devices while driving is targeted to take effect in June, Public Safety Minister Robert Trevors announced today.

"Safety on our roads and highways is always our primary concern," said Trevors. "I believe this law will help keep people safe while allowing for changing technology and for people who require communications devices for their jobs."

The legislation, introduced and passed last fall, prohibits the use or handling of hand-held cellular telephones, texting devices, and portable entertainment devices while driving.

The act also prohibits the manual programming or adjusting of any global positioning system while driving.

Trevors today introduced amendments to the act to exempt drivers who use voice command or one-touch devices; drivers using built-in screens, and telecommunications workers who require special equipment to monitor service levels and disruptions.

"Our government is committed to putting people at the heart of the decisions that affect their lives," said Trevors. "We heard from many New Brunswickers about certain aspects of the original act, and felt we had to take those opinions into account. These changes make the legislation stronger and more enforceable as hand-held device manufacturers and the automotive industry adapt their products to be more safety conscious."

Peace officers and fire and ambulance personnel will be exempt from the bans when performing their duties. Any driver will be permitted to make a 911 call as needed. Drivers of commercial vehicles will be allowed to use two-way radios, and ham radio operators will be permitted to use them for emergency search and rescue activities.

Drivers who violate the legislation will be subject to the loss of three points from their licence and a fine of \$172.50.

Trevors added that the exact day the law will take effect will be announced in the coming weeks, but motorists should begin to adapt to the new law now.

"We all have a responsibility to make sure our attention is on the road when we are behind the wheel," said Trevors. "This legislation will help make a safer New Brunswick for everyone."

To learn more about distracted driver legislation, visit the Department of Public Safety website.

LINK:

- Department of Public Safety: www.gnb.ca/publicsafety