

# Hands-Free for Minnesota

There are many possible distractions when driving, but smartphone use presents a unique and complex challenge. State Farm believes drivers should be held accountable for unsafe behavior. Inattentive and distracted drivers should be subject to penalties regardless of the cause of a distraction. Minnesota is one of many states that has taken a hard look at the issue and updated its existing law to make Minnesota hands-free.

## Distracted Driving



- The share of Americans that own smartphones is now 77%, up from just 35% in 2011 ([Pew Research Center](#)). A 2016 State Farm survey found that accessing the internet and reading and updating social media from a smartphone more than doubled from 2009 to 2016. Additionally, approximately 10% of those surveyed were also playing games on a smartphone while driving.

20%

- Over the last five years (2013-2017) in Minnesota, distracted or inattentive driving was a contributing factor in one in five crashes, resulting in an average of 53 deaths and 216 serious injuries each year ([Pew Research Center](#)).



- In 12 of 15 states with hands-free laws, traffic fatalities decreased on average 15% after the law was passed ([National Safety Council and Insurance Federation](#)). Minnesota's hands-free law prohibits drivers from having a wireless device in their hand while operating a motor vehicle or sitting in traffic. The new law will help law enforcement keep Minnesota safe by issuing citations for violations.

### Just the Facts:

- From 2014 to 2018, distracted driving caused more than 60,000 vehicle crashes in Minnesota (Minnesota Department of Public Safety).
- Text messaging increased the risk of a crash or near-crash by two times (Virginia Tech Transportation Institute).
- Millennials nationwide are the biggest offenders when it comes to texting and driving, with more 16 to 24 year-olds handling phones while driving than any other age group (NHTSA).
- In 2016, 9% of drivers 15 to 19 years old who were involved in fatal crashes nationwide were reported as being distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest percentage of drivers who were distracted at the time of a fatal crash (NHTSA).

### Expansion of Existing Law in Minnesota:

- **The amended law prohibits a person from holding -a cellphone or other wireless device while operating a motor vehicle in motion or a part of traffic.**
- A person operating motor vehicle can use the cellphone or wireless device when in **voice activated or hands-free mode only** to do the following: (1) make or receive a call; (2) initiate, compose, send or listen to an electronic message; (3) use a GPS system; or (4) listen to audio-based content provided the person does not hold the device with one or both hands.
- The new hands-free legislation that goes into effect August 1, 2019 will help save lives and protect Minnesotans.
- Penalties-The first ticket violation is \$50 plus court fees and the second and later tickets are \$275 plus court fees.