



Little Elm Police Department

News Release

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Little Elm Enacts Distracted Driving Ordinance

LITTLE ELM (January 7, 2016) In an effort to reduce unnecessary and preventable vehicle crashes and reduce the occurrence for property damage, personal injury and in some cases, death; the Town of Little Elm has enacted Ordinance #1308 which prohibits the use of hand-held communication devices while operating a motor vehicle.

The ordinance was ratified by Council On Tuesday, Jan. 5 and goes into effect immediately. The Town has established a grace period that runs through Feb. 29. During that time only warnings will be issued. Effective March 1, however, motorists could be cited for violations of this ordinance.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, 1 in 5 crashes are a result of distracted driving. The Town has joined over 50 other municipalities across the state of Texas with the common goal to achieve voluntary compliance from motorists, reduce motor vehicle crashes and injuries, and make our roads safer for everyone.

In a nutshell it is now an offense for a driver to use (hold) a hand-held device while operating a motor vehicle and: (a) Engage in a call; (b) Send, read or write a text message; (c) Take or view pictures or written text whether transmitted by internet or other electronic means, or access or view an internet website or software application; (d) Engage in gaming; or (e) Engage in any other use of the device while operating a motor vehicle. This includes holding the hand-held wireless communication device.

The ordinance does not apply to a driver of a motor vehicle using a hand-held wireless communication device: (a) While the vehicle is legally parked as that term is defined herein, or is being driven on private property; (b) That is used with a hands-free wireless communication device; (c) If the operator is a law enforcement officer, firefighter, member of a governmental emergency medical services function, or member of a governmental emergency management function, and the operator is using the device to conduct official business related to the position; or (d) Who is licensed by the Federal Communications Commission while operating a radio frequency device, other than a hand held wireless communication device; or an operator using a two-way radio communication device.

It also does not prohibit a person from using a hand-held communication device for the purpose of: (a) Reporting illegal activity to a law enforcement agency; (b) Communicating with an emergency response operator, a fire department, a law enforcement agency, a hospital, a physician's office, or a health clinic regarding a medical or other emergency situation; or (c) In the reasonable belief that a person's life or safety is in immediate danger.

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