

**PROVINCE INTRODUCES AMENDMENTS THAT WOULD PROPOSE STRICTER  
PENALTIES TO FURTHER DISCOURAGE DISTRACTED DRIVING**

---

**Distracted Driving Is a Serious  
Road Safety Issue: Schuler**

The government of Manitoba introduced proposed changes to provincial laws that would provide stricter penalties to confront the dangerous and deadly issue of distracted driving, Infrastructure Minister Ron Schuler announced today.

“Many drivers fail to understand the danger associated with distracted driving,” said Schuler. “In Manitoba, using a hand-operated electronic device, such as a cellphone, while driving is illegal. Despite this, there has been an unprecedented four-fold increase in the number of accidents involving distracted drivers between 2011 and 2016, with no decline in serious injuries or fatal collisions caused by distracted driving in Manitoba.”

The Highway Traffic Act would be amended to create a tiered administrative licence suspension of three days for a first offence and seven days for a second and subsequent offence for prohibited use of a hand-operated electronic device while driving.

Further, The Drivers and Vehicles Act would change to make careless driving a reportable offence, requiring a peace officer who lays a careless driving charge to notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. The registrar would review the driver’s record to determine if driver improvement and control measures are necessary.

“These stricter penalties for distracted driving are similar to those of impaired driving because the consequences are just as serious,” Schuler said. “With a roadside licence suspension, we will address the immediate road safety risk and ensure the greatest deterrent impact on driver behaviour.”

In 2016, distracted driving was the leading contributing factor in serious collisions at 29 per cent, and the third factor for fatalities at 27 per cent. In Manitoba, using a hand-operated electronic device such as a cellphone while driving is prohibited, and convicted drivers face a \$204 fine and a drop of five levels on the Driver Safety Rating scale.

Police may charge drivers with using a hand-operated electronic device while driving or careless driving under The Highway Traffic Act. Police use careless driving to address a variety of distractions such as personal grooming and handling pets where the distraction negatively affects driving behaviour.

**For more information:**

Public information, contact Manitoba Government Inquiry: 1-866-626-4862 or 204-945-3744.

Media requests for general information, contact Communications Services Manitoba: 204-945-3765.

Media requests for ministerial comment, contact Communications and Stakeholder Relations: 204-945-4916.