



MEDIA RELEASE

September 23, 2013

IMPORTANT Changes to Maryland Traffic Law Cell Phones and Seatbelts

Effective
OCTOBER 1, 2013

*Driver using hands to use handheld telephone while motor vehicle is in motion – will be a PRIMARY TRAFFIC OFFENSE.

1st Offense is an \$83.00 FINE, including court costs
2nd Offense is a \$140.00 FINE
3rd and Subsequent Offense is a \$160.00 FINE

If the violation contributed to an accident, THREE (3) POINTS will also be assessed in addition to the fine.

*Driver using hands to use handheld telephone while operating a *commercial motor vehicle*, 1st Offense is a \$290.00 FINE and also a PRIMARY TRAFFIC OFFENSE.

Not new law, just a friendly reminder:

*Driver engaged in TEXTING while (driving, operating) a *commercial motor vehicle* is a \$250.00 FINE. If the violation contributed to an accident the FINE is \$1000.00.

*A child younger than 16 years may not ride in an unenclosed cargo bed of a pick-up truck.

New INCREASED FINES

The following violations are now \$83.00 FINES

*Failing to secure a child under age of 8 in a child safety seat when transporting in a motor vehicle.

*Fail to transport a child under age of 16 in (child safety seat per instructions, seatbelt).

*Using a (child safety seat, seatbelt) to (restrain, seat, position) more than one individual.

Operate a motor vehicle with (operator, occupant under age 16) not restrained by (seatbelt, child safety seat).

*Passenger age 16 or more in outboard front seat of motor vehicle without seatbelt restraint.

Example of an "outboard front seat" is a front passenger seat next to a door.

New Secondary TRAFFIC OFFENSE

*Passenger age 16 or more in rear seat of motor vehicle without seatbelt restraint. The FINE is \$83.00, including court costs.

WHO is covered by the LAW?

The Law covers the driver and passengers in both the front and back seats. Each person that is not buckled up (driver and passenger) may receive a ticket for not wearing a seatbelt.

In the case where neither the driver nor any passenger 15 years of age or younger are buckled up, the driver will receive a ticket for both.

Sheriff Tim Cameron and the members of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office would like to remind the traveling public that distracted driving is a deadly epidemic. Talking or texting on a cell phone is the number one source of driver distraction. On average, more than 30,000 people in Maryland are injured annually as a result of distracted driving crashes. We strongly encourage drivers to *PARK THE PHONE, RIDE RESPONSIBLY, and DRIVE DEFENSIVELY*. Doing so, could save more than money; it could save lives.

Maryland Highway Safety Office 410-787-4050
St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Traffic Safety Unit 301-863-4816 Ext. 1456