



Keeping Your Eyes on the Road Ahead - New Fines & Penalties for Distracted Driving

Research shows drivers who use cell phones are **four times more likely to be in a collision** than drivers who focus on the road. Also, when drivers take their eyes off the road for more than two seconds, **their crash risk doubles**. According to the OPP, accidents from distracted driving are up 20% year over year. From MEARIE's perspective, crashes can create unnecessary problems and costly claims. And depending on the parameters of your internal Company Vehicles Use policy, drivers with multiple tickets on their driving record may become ineligible to operate your vehicles – even if it is part of their job!

There is new legislation now in effect as part of an ongoing crackdown on distracted driving. Effective September 1, 2015, the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) enacted **Bill 31 - Making Ontario's Roads Safer**. **This legislation has increased fines and penalties related to distracted driving offenses**. You may consider making your employees aware of this new legislation as it relates to the operation of company vehicles as well as personal vehicles.

Announced by MTO ON August 26th 2015, the following are the updated fines and penalties:

	Former Fine	New Penalty, Effective September 1, 2015
Distracted Driving	\$60 - \$500 fine	\$490* fine and three demerit points; minimum 30-day suspension for novice drivers
"Dooring" of cyclists or vehicles	\$60 - \$500 fine	\$365* fine and three demerit points
Passing cyclists	None	Drivers must leave a one-metre distance when passing cyclists or face a \$110* fine and two demerit points; \$180* fine and two demerit points for failing to leave a one-metre distance when passing cyclists in a community safety zone
Improper lighting on bicycle	\$20 set fine	\$110* fine
Slow Down, Move Over	Slow Down, Move Over for emergency vehicles stopped at roadside to assist	Slow Down, Move Over requirement now also includes tow trucks stopped at roadside to assist; \$490* fine for violation

*Fine as listed is set fine including Victim Fine Surcharge and court costs

Now is the time to review your *Company Vehicle Use* policy and procedures to ensure the outlined best practices are included in your Vehicle Policy related to Distracted Driving.

Please reference the [September 2012 MEARIE Reciprocal News on Distracted Driving, The Influence of Digital Devices](#).

As well, MEARIE can help you by reviewing your Corporate Vehicle Use policies or to help you establish new guidelines. Please contact MEARIE to take advantage of MEARIE Risk Management Services.



Additional Resources:

New Rules effective September 1, 2015
http://news.ontario.ca/mto/en/2015/08/new-road-safety-rules-in-effect-september-1.html?_ga=1.256426312.2141254888.1441214610

New Fine Structure – Effective September 1, 2015
http://news.ontario.ca/mto/en/2015/08/new-rules-of-the-road-effective-september-1-2015.html?_ga=1.23355769.2141254888.1441214610

Distracted Driving – MTO
<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/distracted-driving.shtml>

Future Changes from Bill 31 - Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act:

Effective January 1, 2016:

- Drivers must yield the whole roadway to pedestrians at school crossings and pedestrian crossovers

Expected in Fall 2016:

- New penalties for drug-impaired driving that mirror penalties for alcohol-impaired driving
- Extending remedial measures and ignition interlock requirements to any accumulation of alcohol/drug impaired driving under the Highway Traffic Act

Expected in Spring 2017:

- Expansion of licence plate denial for drivers who do not pay Provincial Offences Act fines for speeding, improper lane changes, illegal turns, driving without insurance and careless driving
- Extending the Reduced Suspension with Ignition Interlock Conduct Review Program to repeat offenders



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