

Drivers and Cellular Telephones: Increasing Public Awareness of District Law

(Last Updated – March 2011)

Recommendation	Status
<p>Develop and implement a long-term plan that makes the purposes of the Act. The District, under the guidance of DDOT, should develop a comprehensive plan to educate the public about the law. The effort could involve issuing news releases to media outlets asking that they remind the public of the law, creating public service announcements for broadcast on television and radio, and incorporating the other elements below. The plan should take into account the input of the Executive Office of the Mayor, MPD, DMV, and other interested stakeholders.</p>	<p>Adopted. On January 12, 2008, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) informed PCB that it added information about the law to its electronic message boards and was working with MPD to produce and distribute information cards about the law.</p> <p>DDOT now reports that it has developed a Distracted Driving Initiative for fiscal years 2009 and 2010 that is a part of the agency’s annual calendar of events. As part of this initiative, the agency conducted distracted driving campaigns on March 1-14, 2010, and October 1-14, 2010, coordinating informational spots in the media with focused enforcement by MPD.</p>
<p>Place signs at entry points into the District alerting drivers to the law. Placing signs at various entry points to the District is an easy and effective way to notify drivers of the law. DDOT should consider installing signs on major roads leading into and passing through the District, such as Interstate 295, Interstate 395, Route 1, Route 50, and Connecticut, Wisconsin, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania avenues.</p>	<p>Adopted. On January 14, 2011, DDOT reported that signs have been placed at entry points into the District notifying drivers of the District’s law, and that DDOT also continues to display warnings on its message boards during the District Driving Campaign period at the entry points described below.</p>

Recommendation	Status
<p>Use electronic display boards in the District to remind drivers of the law. There are no electronic display boards in the District that alert motorists to the requirements of the law. DDOT should consider strategically placing electronic display boards in high traffic areas to assist with increasing compliance with the law.</p>	<p>Adopted. On January 12, 2008, DDOT informed PCB that electronic message boards have been up and running for several weeks, notifying motorists of the District’s cell phone legislation. Display boards are currently in place at ten (10) locations, which are: (1) the inbound Theodore Roosevelt Bridge; (2) the Key Bridge; (3) Reservoir Road and MacArthur Boulevard, N.W.; (4) inbound Rhode Island Avenue, N.E. at the Metro Station; (5) inbound East Capitol Street outside RFK Stadium; (6) the 14th Street Bridge northbound main lane; (7) the 14th Street Bridge northbound HOV lane; (8) eastbound and westbound at the 11th Street Bridge on the SE/SW Freeway; (9) inbound New York Avenue, N.E., near the Washington Times Building; and (10) southbound 16th Street, N.W., at Columbia Road. The standard messages reads: “DC Cell Phone Law; Hands Free or \$100 Fine.”</p> <p>DDOT reported on December 1, 2010 that it continues to display warnings on its message boards during the Distracted Driver campaigns described above.</p>
<p>Provide informational pamphlets to car rental companies. The District should encourage car rental companies operating in the city to distribute informational pamphlets to customers. If those efforts are unsuccessful, the District should consider requiring that these materials be provided to customers. In addition, the District should encourage car rental companies in the metropolitan area outside of the District, including those located at Reagan National, Dulles, and BWI Marshall Airports, to do the same.</p>	<p>Adopted. DDOT reported on January 12, 2008 that MPD distributed informational brochures to the following enterprises and organizations: T mobile; Verizon; AT&T; Sprint; Simply Wireless; Radio Shack; PC Paging & wireless; Starbucks; Washington Welcoming Center; American Gift Center; Catholic Information Center; National Geographic Museum; AAA Travel Insurance & Information Center; American Express Travel Service; IPC Security; FBI Police; Zipcars & FlexCars; Hotel Monaco Washington; Verizon Center; National Law Enforcement Offices Memorial visitors Center; Thrifty Car Rental; Amtrak Traveler’s Aid center; Amtrak Ticket Information Center; Avis Rental Car; Budget Rental Cars; National Rental Cars; Amtrak Police; Howard University Research Building #1; Protective Services Police; Howard University Bookstore; Howard Plaza Towers-West Side; Enterprise Rent-A-Car; Miners Building #14 (Howard University); Mackey Building (Howard University); Smithsonian American Art Museum; International Spy Museum-Refused to display; American University; Red Roof Inn; Embassy Suites; Hotel Harrington; Four Points by Sheraton; Madam Tussaud’s Wax Museum; Shakespeare Theater; Verizon Center; Science Museum of the National Academy of Sciences; Newseum;</p>
<p>Provide informational pamphlets to mobile phone retailers. The District should encourage mobile phone retailers in the city to display posters and provide informational pamphlets to customers about the law. If those efforts are unsuccessful, the District should consider requiring that information about the law be displayed in stores and distributed to customers. The District should also encourage other mobile telephone retailers in the metropolitan area to provide customers with similar information.</p>	
<p>Provide informational pamphlets to driving school or driver education businesses that operate in the District. The District should develop an informational pamphlet that can be distributed to driving schools and their students in the metropolitan area.</p>	
<p>Provide informational pamphlets to hotels, District visitor centers, museums, and other places of interest. The District should develop an informational pamphlet that can be made available at sites visited by large numbers of people from out of town.</p>	

Recommendation	Status
<p>Ensure that Metrobus and D.C. Circulator operators are aware of the Act. The District should work with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the D.C. Circulator bus system to make sure that all bus drivers know about the law and are complying with it.</p>	<p>and the Grand Hyatt Hotel.</p> <p>DDOT also reports that the materials are also given out at police checkpoints.</p>
<p>Ensure that overnight delivery companies and their drivers are aware of the Act. The District should work with overnight delivery companies to ensure that their drivers know about the law and are complying with it.</p>	
<p>Place logos or decals about the law on MPD police cruisers. Under this plan, MPD's efforts would go a long way towards helping to educate residents, commuters, visitors to the city, and MPD officers about the requirements of the Act.</p>	<p>Not adopted. On December 20, 2007, MPD notified PCB that it has explored the idea of signs on police vehicles and decided that the risks associated with such decals outweigh the potential benefits. According to MPD, a 2006 study commissioned by the American Automobile Association, the odds of a crash more than double when the driver's eyes are off the road for more than two seconds. Any decals on police vehicles would need to be fairly small; if drivers were focusing on reading small decals, the distraction would be a danger and therefore not the best option for promoting traffic safety.</p>
<p>Provide continued training to MPD officers on the importance of enforcing and complying with the law. MPD should continue to emphasize to its officers – through roll calls, training opportunities, and internal MPD publications – the importance of officer compliance with the law and of the need to apply it fairly and consistently. Officers who do not follow the law or enforce it fairly should be disciplined.</p>	<p>Adopted. On December 20, 2007, MPD reported that MPD officers continued to receive training through roll call training and 40-hour in-service training. Officers are trained to enforce the law fairly and disciplinary action is taken if it is determined that officers have violated the law.</p>
<p>Furnish adequate funds to carry out the Act. The District should explore a variety of options to help pay for the initiative, including applying for other federal grants and arranging for intra-District transfers of funds from MPD and DMV to DDOT. Having enacted the law, the District Council also has a special responsibility to ensure that it appropriates sufficient funds to support efforts related to the Distracted Driving Safety Act.</p>	<p>Adopted in part, not adopted in part. DDOT reports that DDOT's Highway Safety Office included a Districted Driving Campaign in its media/educational budget for fiscal years 2010 and 2011, working with MPD to enforce the District's laws. DDOT stated further that no other funding source has been explored.</p>