

Texting While Driving Ban Passes House

In an effort to improve safety on Iowa's roadways and save lives, the House approved a ban on text messaging, instant messaging, and e-mailing while driving this week.

Numerous studies have shown that texting is one of the more serious distractions, even showing that a person who is texting is 23 times more likely to be in an accident.

While the bill would become effective on July 1, law enforcement will only issue warnings for one year, until June 30, 2011. After that, law enforcement will issue \$30 citations, which are not considered moving violations.

The penalties are enhanced for drivers who text and are involved in an accident which causes serious injury or death. Persons are subject to a \$500 fine and up to a 90 day suspension of their license, and a \$1,000 fine and up to a 180 day suspension, respectively.

The bill, House File 2456, specifically exempts global positioning devices and navigation systems, as well as talking on a cell phone. The bill is ready for debate by the Senate.