
Thursday, 16 July 2009

NEW LAWS BANNING MOBILES FOR L AND P1 DRIVERS

The State Government is moving to ban all Learner and P1 platers in South Australia from using any type of mobile phone function, including hands-free or bluetooth units, while they're driving.

Road Safety Minister, Michael O'Brien said the mobile phone ban, effective from August 31 this year, was part of State Government's measures to further strengthen the Graduated Licensing Scheme (GLS) for young drivers in South Australia.

"Over the last five years, 2031 young people, including 362 last year, aged between 16 and 24, were either killed or seriously injured on our roads," Mr O'Brien said.

"When you talk or text on a mobile phone you can't effectively concentrate on driving and your risk of crashing increases by up to four times.

"Young drivers are still developing their driving capabilities and it's important that they avoid taking risks like that.

"The only time a mobile phone can be used in a vehicle by Learner or P1 licence holders is if they pull over and park safely.

"Penalties will be in place for anyone caught breaking the new law, which will incur a fine of \$218 and three demerit points," Mr O'Brien said.

The ban includes using mobile phones:

- In a hands-free mode (including Bluetooth technology)
- With a loudspeaker operating
- To send text messages.

Mr O'Brien said similar bans on young drivers' use of mobile phones and related technology had been enacted in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.

"The other new GLS new initiatives we're taking to Parliament in September include legislating to restrict P1 & P2 platers from driving high-powered cars.

"We believe there's strong community concern about young inexperienced drivers getting behind the wheel of these high powered vehicles.

“We want P-platers out of cars capable of extremely high speeds and we’ll be basing our approach to this initiative on existing legislation in Queensland, NSW and Victoria.

“However, we’ll look at including a range of exemptions because we don’t want families to face undue hardship or people to be disadvantaged.

“We’re also going to increase the supervised driving time required by Learner drivers from 50 hours to 75 hours, and increase the minimum time on a Learner’s permit from 6 to 12 months,” Mr O’Brien said.

“We’re committed to reducing road trauma among our young drivers and we believe the new initiatives will go a long way toward ensuring they’re better prepared for when they graduate to full licences.

“About 70,000 Learner and P1 licence holders affected by the new mobile phone regulation changes will be notified via letter from the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. In the meantime further information is available at www.dte.sa.gov.au/roadsafety or by calling 13 10 84.