

# NO CELL PHONES IN SCHOOL ZONES FACTSHEET\*



A new ordinance (law) passed by the Anchorage Assembly on June 20, 2019 makes it unlawful for a driver of any vehicle to talk on a mobile communication device while driving a vehicle within an active school zone or on school grounds, unless the vehicle is stopped or a hands-free device is used.

## 1 PURPOSE OF THE LAW

- Student safety is extremely important.
- Distracted driving is dangerous.
- Talking on a cell phone or mobile communication device is distracted driving and jeopardizes student safety in designated school zones.



## 2 TERMS USED IN THE NEW LAW

A **mobile communication device** is a cellular phone, smart phone, personal data assistant, wireless tablet, computer, or any similar device used for voice or visual communication.

An **active school zone** is a school zone with signage between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. and where the maximum speed is 25 miles per hour or less on the streets permanently or due to a temporary speed reduction indicated by flashing school zone lights.

A **hands-free device** is a phone with speaker capability, an attachment, or other piece of equipment that allows the use of the device without either of the operator's hands.



## 3 THERE ARE SOME EXCEPTIONS IN THE LAW

- A vehicle is **stopped** OR a mobile communication device is used with a **hands-free device**.
- A mobile communication device is **used to dial 911** and make an emergency call.
- An operator of an **authorized emergency vehicle** is using a mobile communication device while acting in an official capacity.

\*This fact sheet is provided as a courtesy to the public to highlight provisions of the law; it is not the law. For specific details of the law and the requirements or prohibitions in the law, please refer to the text of the ordinance (AO No. 2019-51(S)am) or Anchorage Municipal Code section 9.28.055.

# NO CELL PHONES IN SCHOOL ZONES FACTSHEET (CONT.)



## 4 CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATIONS

- A \$500 fine, or
- A class A misdemeanor if a person's driving causes physical injury or death to another person.

## 5 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- **Why isn't talking on cell phones banned while driving everywhere in Alaska?** The State of Alaska has preempted Anchorage's right to ban talking on a cell phone while driving, but reading or typing a text message while driving is prohibited statewide.
- **Can I call my student when I'm there to pick them up?** Yes, if your car is stopped, then you can call your student on your cell phone. Or, you may call your student on a hands-free device.
- **Do these rules apply *only* when the school zone lights are flashing?** No! Most schools don't have flashing lights. These rules apply in an active school zone, where the speed limit is 25 mph or less, even if temporarily indicated by the flashing lights, and is designated by the signs posted that say "School Zone". If the speed limit is never reduced to 25 mph or less, the street is not in an active school zone and the rules don't apply even if there are signs.
- **How can I be sure if I am in a place where I can legally use my cell phone?** If you are unsure, don't use your cell phone! Pull over, stop, and use your cell phone when you are not driving.

*Reviewed by the Municipality of Anchorage Legal Department*

**If you have additional questions, your Assembly Member's contact information may be found at [www.Muni.org/Assembly](http://www.Muni.org/Assembly).**

