

New law: Driving with coffee still (mostly) OK

State clarifies new policies on distracted driving

By AMY NILE
EO Media Group

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Don't worry, drivers in Washington state can still dine behind the wheel or get their caffeine fix without running into trouble with the law, at least most of the time.

The state's new distracted-driving law took effect on July 23. It has caused some confusion about what people are now allowed to do while driving.

The Driving Under the Influence of Electronics Act bans all nonemergency use of hand-held devices. It also prohibits watching videos, even on dash-mounted screens.

Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have banned hand-held cellphone use while driving, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association. However, Washington's law prohibits use of all hand-held devices entirely, even when drivers are stopped at an intersection or in traffic.

They are allowed one touch or swipe to activate hands-free electronics if the device is built-in or secured in a dashboard holder.

Using hand-held electronics while driving is now a primary traffic offense that comes with \$136 ticket. The fine goes up to \$234 for a second viola-



A participant tests a text-while-driving simulator at the Distracted Driving event aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. The event showed a graphic video of the consequences of driving while texting and a static display of a coffin to show a possible outcome of distracted driving.

tion within five years. Offenses go on a driver's record and are reported to their insurance company.

Don't blame the burger

The confusion about what drivers can and can't do behind the wheel comes from a section of the new law that treats non-electronic distractions, including eating, drinking, smoking or grooming as secondary offenses. That means police can give drivers a \$99 ticket for "dangerous distractions" on top of other fines, if they're pulled over for a primary traffic violation, such as speeding,

changing lanes without signaling or using electronics.

To tack on the \$99, officers have to connect a specific distraction, such as eating a cheeseburger, with the primary traffic offense or driving mishap, Washington State Patrol Capt. Monica Alexander said. "We would have to articulate how that cheeseburger caused that collision," she told reporters.

Alexander quickly clarified that she didn't mean to point the finger at an innocent cheeseburger; the driver who was eating it would be to blame.

mission spokeswoman Shelly Baldwin said.

A 2015 study by the commission found 1 in 10 drivers were distracted on the road in one way or another.

Authorities signal differences

Washington State Patrol Sgt. Brad Moon, who oversees six Naselle-based troopers, said he plans to determine whether a \$99 ticket is warranted by asking drivers if they were distracted by doing other things behind the wheel.

"Most people are honest," Moon said.

Troopers will focus on educating the public about the new law for the next six months, he said. In most cases, they'll be giving drivers who are stopped for using electronics warnings, along with information about the changes. However, Moon said, if troopers see egregious violations or if a distracted driver causes a collision, they're likely to get a ticket.

"We'll try to be conservative but consistent," he said. "We're primarily focusing on things people are doing that contribute to poor driving."

However, not all law enforcement authorities see the new law the same way. Pacific County Sheriff Scott Johnson said he doesn't expect the new rules for distractions to change much for his deputies.

"We won't be bothering people for that," he said.

Johnson said existing law gives them the authority to

ticket drivers who cause safety issues because they were eating or drinking on the road so including the distractions in the DUI-E law was unnecessary.

U-turn ahead

The new law has spurred a campaign to ask the Legislature to reconsider the change. More than 37,775 people have signed a petition on Change.org in support of removing the secondary offenses from the law.

Lawmakers have said the goal was to reduce the number of collisions. Distracted driving was a factor in crashes that killed 3,459 people in 2015, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association. That's almost 10 percent of all traffic fatalities nationwide. Researchers say electronic use isn't always reported to police after a crash, so the actual numbers could be higher.

In Washington state, there were 12,399 accidents caused by distracted drivers in 2015, according to the annual state collision summary. Of those crashes, 895 were caused by a driver who was using an electronic device.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has found activities such as dialing or texting while on the road triples the risk of an accident.

"Driving is the most dangerous thing most of us do on a daily basis," Alexander said. "We need to be paying attention."

Sessions raises concerns over Washington state's pot legalization

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson says he's disappointed with a letter from U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions about the state's efforts to regulate marijuana.

In a letter dated July 24, Sessions pointed out to Ferguson and Gov. Jay Inslee that a 2013 Justice Department memo which

was interpreted as clearing the way for states to regulate marijuana did not preclude federal prosecution. Sessions also highlighted a 2016 report from a federally funded drug enforcement organization that raised questions about how effectively the state is controlling the industry.

Sessions asked Ferguson and Inslee to provide information about how they're

addressing the issues raised in the report.

In a written statement Friday, Ferguson said the U.S. attorney general's letter relies on "incomplete, inaccurate and out-of-date information" about Washington's marijuana regulations. He added that "any action from the Department of Justice short of allowing our well-regulated, voter-approved system to continue is unacceptable."

Nursery industry top leader in ag production

Associated Press

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Agriculture says the state's nursery industry was the top commodity in 2016.

The Capital Press reported that the greenhouse and nursery industry leap-frogged the cattle industry, which was Oregon's

leader in production value the year before. The ranking is part of the recently released list of the state's top 20 commodities.

Bruce Pokarney, the department's director of communications, said in a statement on Friday that the nursery industry has historically been number one. Greenhouse and nursery products

brought in \$909 million in 2016.

Meanwhile, Pokarney said that the Oregon hops industry saw a 99 percent increase in production value from 2015 to 2016.

According to the Department of Agriculture, Oregon produces more than 220 agriculture and fishery commodities.

FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA AccuWeather.com

TONIGHT	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
56	73 56	72 55	72 56	71 56
Low clouds	Low clouds and smoky	Smoky with low clouds	Low clouds and smoky	Low clouds

ALMANAC

Astoria through Sunday.

Temperatures

High/low 69°/55°
Normal high/low 68°/54°
Record high 92° in 1940
Record low 44° in 1959

Precipitation

Sunday 0.00"
Month to date 0.00"
Normal month to date 0.14"
Year to date 49.67"
Normal year to date 37.08"

SUN AND MOON

Sunset tonight 8:37 p.m.
Sunrise Tuesday 6:06 a.m.
Moonrise today 8:41 p.m.
Moonset today 6:00 a.m.

Full, Last, New, First

Aug 7, Aug 14, Aug 21, Aug 29

REGIONAL WEATHER

Shown is tomorrow's weather. Temperatures are tonight's lows and tomorrow's highs.

Forecast and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2017

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: The full moon will be at 11:11 a.m., just 14 days until the total solar eclipse on Aug. 21, 2017!

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

TOMORROW'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks

Time	High	Time	Low
2:00 a.m.	8.4 ft.	8:52 a.m.	-0.9 ft.
3:15 p.m.	7.5 ft.	8:57 p.m.	1.7 ft.

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Tues.	W	W
Atlanta	85/71	t	79	69
Boston	78/63	r	73	62
Chicago	74/58	sh	82	62
Denver	65/54	t	77	55
Des Moines	80/59	s	84	61
Detroit	79/57	sh	82	60
El Paso	99/73	pc	94	72
Fairbanks	79/59	pc	73	54
Honolulu	87/75	pc	88	76
Indianapolis	76/58	pc	80	60
Kansas City	78/60	pc	79	63
Las Vegas	102/81	pc	104	82
Los Angeles	84/67	pc	86	67
Memphis	85/71	t	86	69
Miami	92/81	pc	92	81
Nashville	82/67	t	84	65
New Orleans	92/76	t	89	77
New York	73/65	r	79	65
Oklahoma City	86/67	c	84	68
Philadelphia	73/66	r	82	63
St. Louis	82/63	pc	84	63
Salt Lake City	90/69	t	88	68
San Francisco	71/59	pc	73	59
Seattle	87/61	pc	90	64
Washington, DC	76/69	r	82	64

REGIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Tues.	W	W
Baker City	91/49	pc	92	48
Bend	93/57	pc	95	57
Brookings	67/55	c	65	56
Eugene	93/56	pc	95	57
Ilwaco	68/57	c	70	57
Klamath Falls	84/53	pc	86	54
Medford	96/68	pc	99	70
Newberg	95/59	pc	97	61
Newport	64/52	c	64	53
North Bend	67/55	c	67	56
Olympia	89/55	pc	93	56
Pendleton	98/64	pc	100	64
Portland	92/63	pc	94	64
Roseburg	95/62	pc	98	64
Salem	95/60	pc	98	61
Seaside	71/56	c	73	57
Spokane	94/64	pc	94	66
Springfield	94/59	pc	97	59
Vancouver	92/61	pc	94	63
Yakima	102/62	pc	103	65

TOMORROW'S NATIONAL WEATHER

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

ON THE RECORD

Aggravated harassment

On Thursday, Astoria Police arrested Luke Taylor Mische, 44, near Kensington and Skyline avenues on charges of aggravated harassment, assault of a public service officer, third-degree criminal mischief, disorderly conduct, second-degree possession of a forged instrument and resisting arrest. Deputy Police Chief Eric Hal-

erson said there were complaints stretching into last year about Mische playing music too loud. When officers responded to complaints Thursday, Halverson said, Mische broke a body camera mount and kicked one officer in the groin. While being booked into the Clatsop County Jail, Mische was found to be in possession of a counterfeit \$100 bill.

DEATHS

Aug. 5, 2017
PUGH, Lester L., 85, of Clatskanie, died in Longview, Washington. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Aug. 4, 2017
SIMONSEN, Colleen, 86, of Hammond, died in Hammond. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary in Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Aug. 2, 2017
JOHNSON, Brittnay Ann, 27, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

Aug. 1, 2017
WING, Dennis John, 51, of Knappa, died in Knappa. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary in Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

LOTTERIES

OREGON

Sunday's Pick 4:
1 p.m.: 4-4-5-8
4 p.m.: 3-2-2-6
7 p.m.: 7-9-0-8
10 p.m.: 3-3-0-5

Saturday's Megabucks: 7-24-32-35-38-47
Estimated jackpot: \$5.6 million

Saturday's Powerball: 11-21-28-33-45, Powerball: 11
Estimated jackpot: \$307 million

Saturday's Pick 4:
1 p.m.: 6-2-5-1
4 p.m.: 8-9-5-6
7 p.m.: 6-7-3-9
10 p.m.: 4-6-3-1

Friday's Pick 4:
1 p.m.: 7-5-6-8
4 p.m.: 9-7-0-4
7 p.m.: 5-2-8-5
10 p.m.: 6-9-3-0

Friday's Mega Millions: 9-17-25-63-71, Mega Ball: 4
Estimated jackpot: \$346 million

WASHINGTON

Sunday's Daily Game: 6-5-9
Sunday's Keno: 16-18-19-22-25-30-31-32-37-47-51-59-60-62-64-65-66-68-74-78
Sunday's Match 4: 03-04-16-19
Saturday's Daily Game: 6-9-4
Saturday's Hit 5: 02-14-19-29-38
Estimated jackpot: \$170,000
Saturday's Keno: 04-09-12-14-17-19-20-25-27-28-34-35-38-49-55-65-72-73-76-79
Saturday's Lotto: 07-13-23-26-32-42
Estimated jackpot: \$2.9 million
Saturday's Match 4: 03-14-15-24
Friday's Daily Game: 5-6-2
Friday's Keno: 03-09-15-18-24-25-29-30-37-42-44-53-64-65-66-71-72-76-77-80
Friday's Match 4: 07-18-21-23

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY
Astoria City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

TUESDAY
Cannon Beach City Council, 5:30 p.m., work session, City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Lewis & Clark Fire Department Board, 7 p.m., main fire station, 34571 Highway 101 Business.

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