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New mobile phone laws and cameras launched in Qld

RACQ has warned motorists new laws to prevent drivers being distracted by their mobile phones would come into force on Monday, accompanying the roll-out of new seatbelt detection and distraction cameras to improve road safety across Queensland.

Club spokesperson Renee Smith said the updated regulations meant it was illegal to have a phone in your hand or anywhere on your body while driving.

“If you have a phone resting on any part of your body, whether it’s in use or not – you are committing an offence,” Ms Smith said.

“New fixed and mobile detection cameras will come online today across the State and will be able to see into vehicles and detect whether any mobile phone offence has been committed.

“Those caught by the new cameras will be given a warning as part of a three-month grace period before penalties are enforced from 1 November.

“The fine for illegally using a mobile phone is \$1,033 and four demerit points, double demerits if caught twice in 12 months, so the message is very clear, do the right thing and put your phone away.

“More important than the fine and the risk of losing your licence, is the fact that distraction is deadly. Given the shocking number of lives we’ve lost on Queensland roads this year alone it’s important drivers realise the danger of using their device while driving.”

Ms Smith said there were a few exceptions to the new rules which drivers should be aware of.

“Motorists can use their phone when the vehicle is stationary to pay for goods and services, for example at a drive through, to enter an area like a car park, or present digital documentation, like a driver licence or border pass to police,” she said.

“Open and P2 licence holders can also continue to use their phones in a cradle attached to the vehicle, including to accept calls, or in the case of taxi and ride-share drivers, to accept or finish a trip, but it’s illegal to pass a phone to a passenger.

“If you’re using your phone this way then set it up before you drive and then leave it alone. If not then store it away somewhere where you can’t see the screen, like in your pocket.”

Media inquiries: RACQ spokesperson Renee Smith 0409 573 193; Media Advisor Kate Leonard-Jones 0419 543 514.

RACQ is Queensland’s largest club and peak independent motoring organisation. We were formed in 1905 to represent the interests of the State’s first motorists and today campaign for safer drivers, vehicles and roads on behalf of more than 1.7 million members who own the Club. We offer those members a vast range of motoring, insurance, banking, entertainment and travel services and benefits, and each year respond to more than a million calls for roadside assistance.