

Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE BILL NO. 337

BY REPRESENTATIVE AUSTIN BADON

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

MOTOR VEHICLES: Makes using a cellular device while operating a vehicle a secondary offense

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 32:300.8, relative to the use of telephones and electronic communication
3 devices while driving; to prohibit the use of wireless telephones while driving; to
4 prohibit text messaging and e-mailing while driving; to provide for penalties; and to
5 provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 32:300.8 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

8 §300.8. Wireless telephones and electronic communication devices; use prohibited
9 while driving

10 A.(1) The use of a wireless telephone or electronic communication device
11 by an operator of a moving motor vehicle on a public road or highway shall be
12 unlawful, except when the telephone is a hands-free wireless telephone or the
13 electronic communication device is used hands free, provided that its placement does
14 not interfere with the operation of federally required safety equipment, and the
15 operator exercises a high degree of caution in the operation of the motor vehicle.

16 (2) This Section does not apply to the use of a wireless telephone or
17 electronic communication device for the purpose of communicating with any of the
18 following regarding an emergency situation:

19 (a) An emergency system response operator or 911 public safety
20 communications dispatcher.

1 **(b) A hospital or emergency room.**

2 **(c) A physician's office or health clinic.**

3 **(d) An ambulance or fire department rescue service.**

4 **(e) A law enforcement agency.**

5 **(f) A fire department, fire protection district, or volunteer fire department.**

6 **B. For purposes of this Section, the following words and phrases shall mean:**

7 **(1) "Electronic communication device" shall mean a handheld device**
8 **capable of sending or receiving communications without an access line for service**
9 **and which requires the operator to manually insert letters or figures. It does not**
10 **include citizens band radios, citizens band radio hybrids, commercial two-way radio**
11 **communication devices, two-way mobile radio transmitters or receivers used by**
12 **licensees of the Federal Communications Commission in the Amateur Radio Service,**
13 **or electronic communication devices with a push-to-talk function.**

14 **(2) "Hands-free wireless telephone" shall mean a mobile telephone that has**
15 **an internal feature or function, or that is equipped with an attachment or addition,**
16 **whether or not permanently part of such mobile telephone, by which a user engages**
17 **in a conversation without the use of either hand; provided, however, this definition**
18 **shall not preclude the use of either hand to activate, deactivate, or initiate a function**
19 **of the telephone.**

20 **(3) "Use" of a wireless telephone or electronic communication device shall**
21 **include but not be limited to talking or listening to another person on the telephone,**
22 **text messaging, or sending an electronic message via the wireless telephone or**
23 **electronic communication device.**

24 **(4) "Wireless telephone" shall mean a handheld device capable of sending**
25 **or receiving telephone communications without an access line for service and which**
26 **requires the operator to dial numbers manually. It does not include citizens band**
27 **radios or citizens band radio hybrids.**

28 **C. A person found in violation of this Section shall be fined, for a first**
29 **violation, not less than one hundred dollars; for a second violation, not more than one**

1 hundred fifty dollars; for a third violation, not more than two hundred dollars; and
2 for a fourth or subsequent violation, not more than two hundred fifty dollars.

3 D. A violation of this Section shall be a secondary offense.

4 Section 2. This Act shall become effective on January 1, 2012.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

Austin Badon

HB No. 337

Abstract: Prohibits use of wireless telephone or electronic communication devices by operators of moving motor vehicles except when the device is a hands-free wireless telephone or the electronic communication device is used hands free or for an emergency and provides for penalties.

Proposed law prohibits the use of wireless telephones or electronic communication devices by operators of moving motor vehicles except when the device is a hands-free wireless telephone or the electronic communication device is used hands free or for an emergency.

Proposed law defines the terms "electronic communication device", "hands-free wireless telephone", "use", and "wireless telephone".

Proposed law provides that the penalty for a violation of proposed law shall be not less than \$100 for the first violation, not more than \$150 for a second violation, not more than \$200 for a third violation, and not more than \$250 for a fourth or subsequent violation.

Proposed law provides that the offense shall be secondary.

Effective Jan. 1, 2012.

(Adds R.S. 32:300.8)