

## Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit  
10 Hospital Drive  
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1  
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391  
[www.pcchu.ca](http://www.pcchu.ca)



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Health Unit Offers Tips to Minimize Driver Distractions to Keep Our Roads Safe

## *Ban on Driving with Hand-Held Devices In Full Force on February 1*

**Friday, January 29, 2010, Peterborough**

With the ban on using hand-held devices while driving going into full force next Monday, February 1, the Peterborough County-City Health Unit encourages all drivers to minimize distractions while driving.

“According to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, a driver using a cell phone is four times more likely to be in a crash than a driver who is focused on the task of driving,” said Public Health Nurse Becky Downe, who works in the Injury Prevention Program at the Health Unit. “Hand-held devices also create an extra risk on the road because drivers take their eyes off the road and hands off the wheel in order to handle these devices.”

Ms. Downe emphasized that driving is a task that requires the full attention of the driver. Distractions such as the use of cell phones and other hand-held devices while driving influence what a driver sees, their reaction time and how they react. This affects a driver’s ability to safely focus on the road and control their vehicle and can result in a collision with another vehicle, a pedestrian or driving off the road.

Managing driver distractions is important in order to keep our roads safe. The following are some tips on how to minimize distractions while driving so that you can stay focused on the task of driving:

- Before you start driving turn off your cell phone. Consider recording an outgoing voice message that lets callers know you are on the road.
- If you must make or receive a call, or need to reset a global positioning system (GPS), look for a safe opportunity to pull over and park.
- Preset radios, CD players, MP3 players, and GPS units before driving.
- Attend to personal grooming and plan your route before leaving.
- When hungry or thirsty, or when you need to tend to pets or children, pull over when it is safe to do so.

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On October 26, 2009, Ontario introduced new legislation banning hand-held devices while driving and as of February 1, 2010 those who do not comply with the law will face fines of \$155 dollars by way of a Provincial Offence Notice. Since the legislation was introduced last October, officers from the Provincial Police throughout Ontario have issued 64 charges and 3,260 warnings during that period.

To learn more about distracted driving and what is included in the new legislation visit the Ontario Ministry of Transportation website: [www.mto.gov.on.ca](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca).

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### **For further information, please contact:**

Becky Downe  
Public Health Nurse  
Injury Prevention Program  
Peterborough County-City Health Unit  
(705) 743-1000 ext. 344

### **Contact for information on the new legislation and fines:**

Sergeant John Ogradnik  
Traffic Management Unit  
Peterborough Community Police  
(705) 876-1122

Constable Iain McEwan  
Media Relations Officer  
Peterborough County O.P.P.  
(705) 742-0401