

Troy police warn distracted drivers about new law

When driving through Troy, motorists should remember to keep eyes on the road, and hands on the wheel.

An estimated 200 motorists have been issued warnings since the city's new distracted driving law went into effect in July, according to Lt. David Livingston of the Troy Police Special Operations Section. Tickets, which carry no points but can cost the offender up to \$200, will be issued starting Oct. 1. Troy is the only city in Michigan to have a primary distracted driving ordinance, meaning motorists can be cited just for talking on their cell phones.

Most municipalities across the state have similar laws, but are only secondary, meaning a motorist must be violating a separate law before being stopped for a distracted driving offense. The ordinance is still in its educational phase, says Livingston, and informational postcards are being developed to both inform and warn violators, as well as the public. However, some believe the new law was created to generate revenue in an effort to curb the city's financial deficit and not to educate, an opinion Livingston says is untrue.

"It is a public traffic safety issue ... we find that a lot of the people who are speeding and running red lights are on their cell phones." He adds that many cities and states nationwide are passing similar laws. "We're out to make our roads safe. That's our goal."

The city's distracted driving ordinance, which was inspired by the statewide texting ban, prohibits motorists from engaging in any activity that prevents them from maintaining control of their vehicle.

Such actions include, but are not limited to, talking/texting on a cell phone, personal grooming, reading, writing and physical interaction with pets and passengers.