
City of Lakeway to enforce hands-free ordinance

Beginning July 1, 2015, the City of Lakeway will end its grace period and start enforcing its hands-free ordinance that applies to motor vehicle drivers and bicyclists.

At their April 20 meeting, Lakeway City Council members amended the Lakeway Municipal Code (Chapter 18, "Traffic and Vehicles) to prohibit the use of hand-held cell phones and other mobile devices while operating a motor vehicle or bicycle, effective immediately.

Such uses include:

- Engaging in a call;
- Sending, reading, or writing a text message;
- Viewing pictures or written text;
- Gaming or using apps; and,
- Engaging in any other use of the device.

Engaging in a call means dialing, talking, or listening on a hand-held mobile communication device but does not include holding the device to activate or deactivate it.

"This ordinance mirrors those passed by the cities of Austin and Bee Cave," Lakeway Police Chief Todd Radford said. "By adopting this ordinance, the city is working to reduce the increasing number of accidents caused by distracted drivers in Lakeway."

The ordinance will not apply to drivers and bicyclists using hands-free technology, such as Bluetooth and mounted devices, or operating an authorized emergency vehicle in an official capacity.

In addition, drivers and bicyclists will not be prosecuted if they are:

- Legally parked or who are operating a motor vehicle or bicycle on private property. This provision does not apply to drivers stopped at a stoplight;
- Using a hands-free mobile telephone;
- Communicating with an emergency response operator, fire department, law enforcement agency, hospital, physician's office, or health clinic regarding a medical or emergency situation; or,
- Reporting an illegal activity or summoning emergency help.

If convicted of a first offense, a driver or bicyclist shall be fined not more than \$100. Additional convictions carry fines of up to \$500.
