

Introduced by Senator SimitianDecember 6, 2010

An act to amend Sections 12804.9, 12810.3, 23123, 23123.5, and 23124 of, and to add Section 23124.5 to, the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 28, as introduced, Simitian. Vehicles: electronic wireless communications devices: prohibitions.

(1) Existing law requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to examine applicants for specific driver's licenses and requires that the examination include, among other things, a test of the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the provisions of the Vehicle Code governing the operation of vehicles upon the highways.

This bill would require the department to include a test of the applicant's understanding of the distractions and dangers of handheld cell phone use and text messaging while operating a motor vehicle.

(2) Existing law establishes that specified convictions and violations under the Vehicle Code and traffic-related incidents count as points against a driver's record for purposes of the suspension or revocation of the privilege to drive.

Under existing law, it is an infraction for any person to drive a motor vehicle while using a wireless telephone, unless that telephone is designed and configured to allow hands-free listening and talking operation, and is used in that manner while driving, except as otherwise provided. A person under 18 years of age is prohibited from driving a motor vehicle while using a wireless telephone, even if equipped with a hands-free device, or while using a mobile service device. A point is not given for a violation of these provisions.

This bill would assess a violation point on a 2nd or subsequent violation of these provisions.

(3) Under existing law, a person is prohibited from driving a motor vehicle while using an electronic wireless communications device to write, send, or read a text-based communication, except as specified.

This bill would require that this provision does not apply if the person is using a voice-operated, hands-free device.

The bill also would increase the base fines for a violation of any of the above described prohibitions involving driving a motor vehicle while using a wireless telephone or electronic wireless communications device from \$20 to \$50 and the fine for a 2nd or subsequent offense from \$50 to \$100, would apply those prohibitions to a person riding a bicycle, and would impose a total fine amount of \$20 for a first offense and \$50 for each subsequent offense for a violation of those prohibitions when the offense is committed while riding a bicycle. By expanding the scope of existing crimes, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(4) Existing law prohibits a law enforcement officer from stopping a vehicle for the sole purpose of determining whether the driver is violating the prohibition of driving a motor vehicle while using a wireless telephone.

This bill would delete that prohibition.

(5) Existing law requires that the base fines collected from violations of the Vehicle Code for crimes other than parking offenses are subject to distribution to specified funds of a state or local agency as set forth by statute or to the proper funds of a city or county, as applicable.

This bill would require the county treasurer to submit \$10 from each fine collected under this provision for violating the above-described prohibitions involving driving a motor vehicle or riding a bicycle while using a wireless telephone or electronic wireless communications device to the Controller, for deposit into the Distracted Driver Education Fund, which would be created in the State Treasury for an education program on the dangers of cell phone use and text messaging while driving, thereby imposing a state-mandated local program by imposing a new duty on local officials. The bill would require the Legislature, upon appropriation in the Budget Bill, to allocate this money to the Office of Traffic Safety in the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency for this purpose.

(6) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that with regard to certain mandates no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

With regard to any other mandates, this bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs so mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 12804.9 of the Vehicle Code is amended
2 to read:

3 12804.9. (a) (1) The examination shall include all of the
4 following:

5 (A) A test of the applicant’s knowledge and understanding of
6 the provisions of this code governing the operation of vehicles
7 upon the highways.

8 (B) A test of the applicant’s ability to read and understand
9 simple English used in highway traffic and directional signs.

10 (C) A test of the applicant’s understanding of traffic signs and
11 signals, including the bikeway signs, markers, and traffic control
12 devices established by the Department of Transportation.

13 (D) *A test of the applicant’s understanding of the distractions*
14 *and dangers of handheld cell phone use and text messaging while*
15 *operating a motor vehicle.*

16 ~~(D)~~

17 (E) An actual demonstration of the applicant’s ability to exercise
18 ordinary and reasonable control in operating a motor vehicle by
19 driving it under the supervision of an examining officer. The
20 applicant shall submit to an examination appropriate to the type
21 of motor vehicle or combination of vehicles he or she desires a
22 license to drive, except that the department may waive the driving
23 test part of the examination for any applicant who submits a license
24 issued by another state, territory, or possession of the United States,
25 the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico if
26 the department verifies through any acknowledged national driver

1 record data source that there are no stops, holds, or other
2 impediments to its issuance. The examining officer may request
3 to see evidence of financial responsibility for the vehicle prior to
4 supervising the demonstration of the applicant's ability to operate
5 the vehicle. The examining officer may refuse to examine an
6 applicant who is unable to provide proof of financial responsibility
7 for the vehicle, unless proof of financial responsibility is not
8 required by this code.

9 ~~(E)~~

10 (F) A test of the hearing and eyesight of the applicant, and of
11 other matters that may be necessary to determine the applicant's
12 mental and physical fitness to operate a motor vehicle upon the
13 highways, and whether any grounds exist for refusal of a license
14 under this code.

15 (2) The examination for a class A or class B driver's license
16 under subdivision (b) shall also include a report of a medical
17 examination of the applicant given not more than two years prior
18 to the date of the application by a health care professional. As used
19 in this paragraph, "health care professional" means a person who
20 is licensed, certified, or registered in accordance with applicable
21 state laws and regulations to practice medicine and perform
22 physical examinations in the United States. Health care
23 professionals are doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathy,
24 physician assistants, and registered advanced practice nurses, or
25 doctors of chiropractic who are clinically competent to perform
26 the medical examination presently required of motor carrier drivers
27 by the federal Department of Transportation. The report shall be
28 on a form approved by the department, the federal Department of
29 Transportation, or the Federal Aviation Administration. In
30 establishing the requirements, consideration may be given to the
31 standards presently required of motor carrier drivers by the Federal
32 Highway Administration.

33 (3) A physical defect of the applicant that, in the opinion of the
34 department, is compensated for to ensure safe driving—~~ability,~~
35 *ability* shall not prevent the issuance of a license to the applicant.

36 (b) In accordance with the following classifications, an applicant
37 for a driver's license shall be required to submit to an examination
38 appropriate to the type of motor vehicle or combination of vehicles
39 the applicant desires a license to drive:

40 (1) Class A includes the following:

- 1 (A) A combination of vehicles, if a vehicle being towed has a
- 2 gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds.
- 3 (B) A vehicle towing more than one vehicle.
- 4 (C) A trailer bus.
- 5 (D) The operation of all vehicles under class B and class C.
- 6 (2) Class B includes the following:
- 7 (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (H) of paragraph (3),
- 8 a single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than
- 9 26,000 pounds.
- 10 (B) A single vehicle with three or more axles, except any
- 11 three-axle vehicle weighing less than 6,000 pounds.
- 12 (C) A bus except a trailer bus.
- 13 (D) A farm labor vehicle.
- 14 (E) A single vehicle with three or more axles or a gross vehicle
- 15 weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds towing another vehicle
- 16 with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less.
- 17 (F) A house car over 40 feet in length, excluding safety devices
- 18 and safety bumpers.
- 19 (G) The operation of all vehicles covered under class C.
- 20 (3) Class C includes the following:
- 21 (A) A two-axle vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of
- 22 26,000 pounds or less, including when the vehicle is towing a
- 23 trailer or semitrailer with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000
- 24 pounds or less.
- 25 (B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), a two-axle vehicle
- 26 weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen when towing a trailer
- 27 coach not exceeding 9,000 pounds gross.
- 28 (C) A house car of 40 feet in length or less.
- 29 (D) A three-axle vehicle weighing 6,000 pounds gross or less.
- 30 (E) A house car of 40 feet in length or less or a vehicle towing
- 31 another vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds
- 32 or less, including when a tow dolly is used. A person driving a
- 33 vehicle ~~may~~ shall not tow another vehicle in violation of Section
- 34 21715.
- 35 (F) (i) A two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more
- 36 unladen when towing either a trailer coach or a fifth-wheel travel
- 37 trailer not exceeding 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating,
- 38 when the towing of the trailer is not for compensation.
- 39 (ii) A two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen
- 40 when towing a fifth-wheel travel trailer exceeding 10,000 pounds,

1 but not exceeding 15,000 pounds, gross vehicle weight rating,
2 when the towing of the trailer is not for compensation, and if the
3 person has passed a specialized written examination provided by
4 the department relating to the knowledge of this code and other
5 safety aspects governing the towing of recreational vehicles upon
6 the highway.

7 ~~The~~

8 (iii) *The* authority to operate combinations of vehicles under
9 this subparagraph may be granted by endorsement on a class C
10 license upon completion of that written examination.

11 (G) A vehicle or combination of vehicles with a gross
12 combination weight rating or a gross vehicle weight rating, as
13 those terms are defined in subdivisions (j) and (k), respectively,
14 of Section 15210, of 26,000 pounds or less, if all of the following
15 conditions are met:

16 (i) Is operated by a farmer, an employee of a farmer, or an
17 instructor credentialed in agriculture as part of an instructional
18 program in agriculture at the high school, community college, or
19 university level.

20 (ii) Is used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations.

21 (iii) Is not used in the capacity of a for-hire carrier or for
22 compensation.

23 (H) Firefighting equipment, provided that the equipment is
24 operated by a person who holds a firefighter endorsement pursuant
25 to Section 12804.11.

26 (I) A motorized scooter.

27 (J) Class C does not include a two-wheel motorcycle or a
28 two-wheel motor-driven cycle.

29 (4) Class M1. A two-wheel motorcycle or a motor-driven cycle.
30 Authority to operate a vehicle included in a class M1 license may
31 be granted by endorsement on a class A, B, or C license upon
32 completion of an appropriate examination.

33 (5) (A) Class M2 includes the following:

34 (i) A motorized bicycle or moped, or a bicycle with an attached
35 motor, except a motorized bicycle described in subdivision (b) of
36 Section 406.

37 (ii) A motorized scooter.

38 (B) Authority to operate vehicles included in class M2 may be
39 granted by endorsement on a class A, B, or C license upon
40 completion of an appropriate examination, except that no

1 endorsement is required for a motorized scooter. Persons holding
2 a class M1 license or endorsement may operate vehicles included
3 in class M2 without further examination.

4 (c) A driver's license or driver certificate is not valid for
5 operating a commercial motor vehicle, as defined in subdivision
6 (b) of Section 15210, any other motor vehicle defined in paragraph
7 (1) or (2) of subdivision (b), or any other vehicle requiring a driver
8 to hold any driver certificate or any driver's license endorsement
9 under Section 15275, unless a medical certificate approved by the
10 department, the federal Department of Transportation, or the
11 Federal Aviation Administration, that has been issued within two
12 years of the date of the operation of that vehicle, is within the
13 licensee's immediate possession, and a copy of the medical
14 examination report from which the certificate was issued is on file
15 with the department. Otherwise, the license is valid only for
16 operating class C vehicles that are not commercial vehicles, as
17 defined in subdivision (b) of Section 15210, and for operating class
18 M1 or M2 vehicles, if so endorsed, that are not commercial
19 vehicles, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 15210.

20 (d) A license or driver certificate issued prior to the enactment
21 of Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 15200) is valid to operate
22 the class or type of vehicles specified under the law in existence
23 prior to that enactment until the license or certificate expires or is
24 otherwise suspended, revoked, or canceled.

25 (e) The department may accept a certificate of driving skill that
26 is issued by an employer, authorized by the department to issue a
27 certificate under Section 15250, of the applicant, in lieu of a driving
28 test, on class A or B applications, if the applicant has first qualified
29 for a class C license and has met the other examination
30 requirements for the license for which he or she is applying. The
31 certificate may be submitted as evidence of the applicant's skill
32 in the operation of the types of equipment covered by the license
33 for which he or she is applying.

34 (f) The department may accept a certificate of competence in
35 lieu of a driving test on class M1 or M2 applications, when the
36 certificate is issued by a law enforcement agency for its officers
37 who operate class M1 or M2 vehicles in their duties, if the applicant
38 has met the other examination requirements for the license for
39 which he or she is applying.

1 (g) The department may accept a certificate of satisfactory
2 completion of a novice motorcyclist training program approved
3 by the commissioner pursuant to Section 2932 in lieu of a driving
4 test on class M1 or M2 applications, if the applicant has met the
5 other examination requirements for the license for which he or she
6 is applying. The department shall review and approve the written
7 and driving test used by a program to determine whether the
8 program may issue a certificate of completion.

9 (h) Notwithstanding subdivision (b), a person holding a valid
10 California driver's license of any class may operate a short-term
11 rental motorized bicycle without taking any special examination
12 for the operation of a motorized bicycle, and without having a
13 class M2 endorsement on that license. As used in this subdivision,
14 "short-term" means 48 hours or less.

15 (i) A person under ~~the age of~~ 21 years ~~may~~ of age shall not be
16 issued a class M1 or M2 license or endorsement unless he or she
17 provides evidence satisfactory to the department of completion of
18 a motorcycle safety training program that is operated pursuant to
19 Article 2 (commencing with Section 2930) of Chapter 5 of Division
20 2.

21 (j) A driver of a vanpool vehicle may operate with a class C
22 license but shall possess evidence of a medical examination
23 required for a class B license when operating vanpool vehicles. In
24 order to be eligible to drive the vanpool vehicle, the driver shall
25 keep in the vanpool vehicle a statement, signed under penalty of
26 perjury, that he or she has not been convicted of reckless driving,
27 drunk driving, or a hit-and-run offense in the last five years.

28 SEC. 2. Section 12810.3 of the Vehicle Code is amended to
29 read:

30 12810.3. Notwithstanding subdivision (f) of Section 12810, a
31 violation point shall ~~not~~ only be given for a *second or subsequent*
32 conviction of a violation of subdivision (a) of Section ~~23123~~, *23123*
33 *or* subdivision (a) of Section ~~23123.5~~, *or subdivision (b) of Section*
34 ~~23124~~ *23123.5*.

35 SEC. 3. Section 23123 of the Vehicle Code, is amended to
36 read:

37 23123. (a) (1) A person shall not drive a motor vehicle while
38 using a wireless telephone unless that telephone is specifically
39 designed and configured to allow hands-free listening and talking,
40 and is used in that manner while driving.

1 (2) A person shall not ride a bicycle while using a wireless
2 telephone unless that telephone is specifically designed and
3 configured to allow hands-free listening and talking, and is used
4 in that manner while riding the bicycle.

5 (b) (1) A violation of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) is an
6 infraction punishable by a base fine of fifty dollars (\$50) for a first
7 offense and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each subsequent
8 offense.

9 ~~(b)~~

10 (2) A violation of ~~this section~~ paragraph (2) of subdivision (a)
11 is an infraction punishable by a ~~base~~ total fine of twenty dollars
12 (\$20) for a first offense and fifty dollars (\$50) for each subsequent
13 offense. *The fines imposed for a first or subsequent offense shall*
14 *be the total amount collected and, notwithstanding any other law,*
15 *other penalties, assessments, surcharges, fees, or any other charge*
16 *shall not be imposed.*

17 (c) This section does not apply to a person using a wireless
18 telephone for emergency purposes, including, but not limited to,
19 an emergency call to a law enforcement agency, health care
20 provider, fire department, or other emergency services agency or
21 entity.

22 (d) This section does not apply to an emergency services
23 professional using a wireless telephone while operating an
24 authorized emergency vehicle, as defined in Section 165, in the
25 course and scope of his or her duties.

26 (e) This section does not apply to a person driving a schoolbus
27 or transit vehicle that is subject to Section 23125.

28 (f) This section does not apply to a person while *riding a bicycle*
29 *or driving a motor vehicle on private property.*

30 ~~(g) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2011.~~

31 SEC. 4. Section 23123.5 of the Vehicle Code is amended to
32 read:

33 23123.5. (a) (1) A person shall not drive a motor vehicle while
34 using an electronic wireless communications device to write, send,
35 or read a text-based ~~communication~~ communication, *unless the*
36 *person is using a voice-operated, hands-free device.*

37 (2) A person shall not ride a bicycle while using an electronic
38 wireless communications device to write, send, or read a text-based
39 communication.

1 (b) As used in this ~~section~~ *section*, “write, send, or read a
 2 text-based communication” means using an electronic wireless
 3 communications device to manually communicate with any person
 4 using a text-based communication, including, but not limited to,
 5 communications referred to as a text message, instant message, or
 6 electronic mail.

7 (c) For purposes of this section, a person shall not be deemed
 8 to be writing, reading, or sending a text-based communication if
 9 the person reads, selects, or enters a telephone number or name in
 10 an electronic wireless communications device for the purpose of
 11 making or receiving a telephone call.

12 (d) *(1) A violation of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) is an*
 13 *infraction punishable by a base fine of fifty dollars (\$50) for a first*
 14 *offense and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each subsequent*
 15 *offense.*

16 ~~(d)~~

17 (2) A violation of ~~this section~~ *paragraph (2) of subdivision (a)*
 18 *is an infraction punishable by a base total fine of twenty dollars*
 19 *(\$20) for a first offense and fifty dollars (\$50) for each subsequent*
 20 *offense. The fines imposed for a first or subsequent offense shall*
 21 *be the total amount collected and, notwithstanding any other law,*
 22 *other penalties, assessments, surcharges, fees, or any other charge*
 23 *shall not be imposed.*

24 (e) This section does not apply to an emergency services
 25 professional using an electronic wireless communications device
 26 while operating an authorized emergency vehicle, as defined in
 27 Section 165, in the course and scope of his or her duties.

28 SEC. 5. Section 23124 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

29 23124. (a) This section applies to a person under ~~the age of~~
 30 ~~18 years~~ *18 years of age.*

31 (b) Notwithstanding Section 23123, a person described in
 32 subdivision (a) shall not drive a motor vehicle while using a
 33 wireless telephone, even if equipped with a hands-free device, or
 34 while using a mobile service device.

35 (c) A violation of this section is an infraction punishable by a
 36 base fine of ~~twenty~~ *fifty* dollars ~~(\$20)~~ *(\$50)* for a first offense and
 37 ~~fifty one hundred~~ *dollars* ~~(\$50)~~ *(\$100)* for each subsequent offense.

38 ~~(d) A law enforcement officer shall not stop a vehicle for the~~
 39 ~~sole purpose of determining whether the driver is violating~~
 40 ~~subdivision (b).~~

1 ~~(e) Subdivision (d) does not prohibit a law enforcement officer~~
2 ~~from stopping a vehicle for a violation of Section 23123.~~

3 ~~(f)~~

4 (d) This section does not apply to a person using a wireless
5 telephone or a mobile service device for emergency purposes,
6 including, but not limited to, an emergency call to a law
7 enforcement agency, health care provider, fire department, or other
8 emergency services agency or entity.

9 ~~(g)~~

10 (e) For the purposes of this section, “mobile service device”
11 includes, but is not limited to, a broadband personal communication
12 device, specialized mobile radio device, handheld device or laptop
13 computer with mobile data access, pager, and two-way messaging
14 device.

15 ~~(h) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2008.~~

16 SEC. 6. Section 23124.5 is added to the Vehicle Code, to read:

17 23124.5. Notwithstanding Section 1463 of the Penal Code, the
18 county treasurer shall submit to the Controller ten dollars (\$10)
19 from each fine collected under Sections 23123, 23123.5, and
20 23124. The Controller shall deposit that amount into the Distracted
21 Driver Education Fund, which is hereby created in the State
22 Treasury for an education program on the dangers of cell phone
23 use and text messaging while driving. The Legislature, upon
24 appropriation in the Budget Bill, shall allocate this money to the
25 Office of Traffic Safety in the Business, Transportation and
26 Housing Agency for this purpose.

27 SEC. 7. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to
28 Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution for certain
29 costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district
30 because, in that regard, this act creates a new crime or infraction,
31 eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime
32 or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the
33 Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the
34 meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California
35 Constitution.

36 However, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that
37 this act contains other costs mandated by the state, reimbursement
38 to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made

- 1 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
- 2 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

O