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For immediate release

CAA MANITOBA APPLAUDS TOUGHER PENALTIES FOR DISTRACTED DRIVERS

It's clear many drivers still not getting the message

Five years since the distracted driving legislation came into effect in Manitoba, and yet it is obvious many motorists aren't getting the message about the dangers of this habit. That's why CAA Manitoba is pleased the Government of Manitoba is continuing to toughen sanctions for distracted drivers by adding more demerits to the existing penalty.

"Since the legislation was first introduced, we have always said you can't close to the door on making changes until people change their behaviour," says Mike Mager, President and CEO of CAA Manitoba. "It's clear many people continue to text and drive, that's why we are pleased to see more demerits being added to this penalty."

The current penalty for distracted driving in Manitoba is two demerits and \$198. New amendments introduced today would add three demerits for a total of five demerits and \$198.

"Just like when seatbelts became mandatory and impaired driving was outlawed, it takes some time for drivers to change their habits," says Mager. "It needs to become socially unacceptable."

In addition to the changes today, CAA Manitoba will be encouraging government to review innovative practices in other provinces to further curb distracted driving, including:

- Zero tolerance for distracted driving offences while in the Graduated Driver Licensing Program, like in British Columbia and Saskatchewan
- Tiered offences for repeat offenders, like in Nova Scotia
- Vehicle impoundment for repeat offenders within the same year like in Saskatchewan
- Broader definition of distracted driving to include GPS use, personal grooming, reading like in Alberta

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Distracted Driving in MB

What do CAA Manitoba members think about distracted driving laws?

99%

Percentage of drivers who see others texting and driving
(unchanged since 2011)

79%

Percentage of drivers who feel it is unlikely for someone texting and driving will be caught by police
(down slightly from 2014)

95%

Percentage of drivers who would support a no-tolerance policy for GDL program drivers in Manitoba

92%

Percentage of drivers who would support a tiered distracted driving penalty system in MB

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