

Media Release

The Hon Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Police
Minister for Crime Prevention
Minister for Racing



Friday, 2 June 2023

NEW CAMERAS DETECTING THOUSANDS OF DISTRACTED DRIVERS

Victorians are being urged to get back to the basics of safe driving and remove any potential distractions, as new data shows a shocking amount of drivers not obeying the road rules.

Almost 3000 Victorians have been detected not wearing seatbelts or driving while using a mobile phone according to initial data from the Government's new mobile phone and seatbelt detection cameras.

During their first month of operation, the cameras have detected 2,993 offences, including 1,606 drivers and 225 passengers not wearing seatbelts and 1,162 drivers using mobile phones.

The cameras began operation in April this year, using two high-tech AI cameras to capture high-resolution images of vehicles – including during poor weather and low light when distracted driving is even more dangerous.

Drivers are being issued with an advisory letter throughout the three month grace period until 30 June to ensure they have an opportunity to heed safety warnings and adjust their behaviour before enforcement begins on 1 July.

Once in force, drivers will face penalties of four demerit points and a \$577 fine if caught using a mobile phone while driving, and a \$385 fine for not wearing a seatbelt correctly.

There are currently three camera trailer systems in operation, which can be deployed to up to 200 locations in rural and metropolitan areas. They will help support enforcement of new road rules that came into effect from 31 March, bringing Victoria in line with the Australian Road Rules.

The new rules extended current mobile phone laws to cover modern technologies like in-built vehicle systems, mounted devices, wearable devices (such as smartwatches) and portable devices (such as mobile phones and tablets). Victoria Police can also issue roadside fines for illegal use of devices and seatbelt offences.

Distracted driving is a major contributor to serious and fatal collisions. In 2022, nearly a quarter of vehicle occupants who died and their seatbelt status was known were not wearing a seatbelt. Drivers are also 10 times more at risk of crashing if they are texting, browsing or emailing on their mobile phone.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested \$33.7 million in the new camera technology as part of the *Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030*, which aims to save lives and reduce trauma on Victorian roads.

For more information on the new road rules visit [the VicRoads website](#) and on the mobile phone and seat belt detection cameras visit [the Victorian Government's website](#).

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police Anthony Carbines

"Every life lost on our roads is a tragedy and it's shocking to see that so many people are putting their safety and the lives of others at risk."

"Driver distraction is a major contributor to serious and fatal collisions, and yet it is completely avoidable. I urge Victorians to buckle up and remove as much distraction as possible to them while they're driving."

Quote attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne

"We need all Victorians to play their part in keeping our roads safe – plan ahead, drive to the conditions, take regular breaks, avoid distractions and don't take any risks."

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