



## Truckers Banned From Texting While Driving

Written On January 26, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

According to [BusinessWeek](#) and other sources, the Department of Transportation announced today that it is prohibiting truck and bus drivers from sending text messages on hand-held devices while operating commercial vehicles. This is a long overdue rule, and there is some discussion of the federal government extending the rule to all drivers. This may be overreaching by Washington, but one possibility would be to deny federal highway funds to any state that doesn't pass a law banning texting while driving. Here are excerpts from the BusinessWeek article:

The prohibition, which applies to drivers of interstate buses and trucks over 10,000 pounds, is effective immediately, the department said in a statement. Truck and bus drivers who text while driving commercial vehicles may be subject to civil or criminal penalties of up to \$2,750, the department said.

Nineteen states and the District of Columbia already prohibit all drivers from texting behind the wheel, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association. Another 10 states restrict texting by novice drivers.

Trucking and bus industry officials said they support the texting ban.

Research by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration shows that drivers who send and receive text messages take their eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds out of every 6 seconds while texting, the department said. At 55 miles per hour, this means that the driver is traveling the length of a football field, including the end zones, without looking at the road, the department said.

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Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has been campaigning against texting and cell phone use while driving. President Barack Obama signed an executive order directing federal employees not to engage in text messaging while driving government-owned vehicles or with government-owned equipment. Federal employees were required to comply with the ban starting on Dec. 30, 2009.

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