

Back up details for Scott Johnson's Distracted Driving Recommendations for vehicles and bicycles on at the UTC Mtg. 4/11/17

A) Prohibit the use of any mobile communication device while a vehicle is stopped at a traffic light, a stop sign, in traffic or any other time when the vehicle is in "drive", but not in motion. Scott's note: This idea was recommended by the 2014 COA Distracted Driving Study Group, but was taken out by the former Austin City Council in 2014.

Support for this recommendation:

Based on my research all other cities in Texas who have adopted a hands-free ordinance allow for enforcement while the vehicle is in "drive", but temporarily stopped other than the exemptions built into the Austin ordinance such as using the phone in emergency situations.

B) Prohibit the use of music headphones (that cover all/most of the entire diameter of the ear or greater, ear buds would be allowed) while operating a motor vehicle and are not designed for 2-way communication.

Support for this recommendation:

Listening to music through headphones that cover most or all of the ear create an auditory distraction that competes with the driver's attention. These type of headphones are simply for listening to music and some of them are noise canceling meaning that the sound of a siren on a public safety vehicle is much more difficult to hear. Only headphones that allow 2-way communication and that can be operated hands-free should be allowed.

C) Prohibit anyone in a motor vehicle from sharing any video recording or game such as "Pokeman Go" with the driver of the vehicle.

Support for this recommendation:

It is very common to share videos among friends by holding a smart phone in front of the other person's eyes to get a reaction. Some games such as "Pokeman Go" require a map to discover where the sites are to find these virtual creatures. When the driver focuses on the smart phone to use as a guide or for enjoyment this can create a significant distraction that can effect pedestrians, bicyclists and other drivers. Enforcement of this recommendation could be done while APD is using a Capital Metro bus to identify distracted driving.

D) Prohibit anyone in a motor vehicle from taking a still photograph or video of other vehicle occupants while the vehicle is in drive.

Support for this recommendation:

Another common activity among friends and family is to take still photos or videos. If the driver turns their head towards the camera while driving this is along with any flash from the camera is a significant distraction that puts at risk all road users.