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Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett signed a law banning text messaging while driving, effective today, March 8.

Under SB 314, any driver who is caught text messaging while behind the wheel, will be subject to primary enforcement, which allows law officers to stop and cite offenders for that reason alone.

Fines will be \$50.

“In 2010 there were nearly 14,000 crashes in Pennsylvania where distracted driving played a role,” said Department of the Army police officer, Sgt. 1st Class Svend Sheppard, Carlisle Barracks Traffic and Bike Patrol Supervisor.

Law enforced on Carlisle Barracks

The intent of this law, and the earlier law prohibiting using hand-held communications devices while driving on military installations was that it drives an increased attention to the importance of safe driving and that it changes driving behavior,” said Sheppard.

The use of hand-held communications devices while driving has been banned on military installations since Dec. 1, 2005.

“The cell phone regulation increased traffic safety on installations, but more importantly, it encourages safe driving habits,” said Sheppard.

Vehicle operators on DoD installations are prohibited from using cell phones unless the vehicle is safely parked or they are using a hands-free device. Drivers are also prohibited from wearing headphones or earphones while driving because the use of these devices impairs driving and prevents the driver from recognizing emergency signals, alarms, the approach of other vehicles and human voices.