



Those of you tempted to send texts to folks while you're stuck in traffic on Red Mountain Expressway this evening (or even worse, if you're speeding along on your way home) need to start thinking again. It's probably time to start breaking yourself of the habit since it's about to get a little pricey to do so throughout the state.

Early Tuesday afternoon [the Alabama legislature passed a bill](#) that bans drivers from using a wireless device to writing, sending, or reading text messages, e-mails, or instant messages, while operating a motor vehicle. [Governor Bentley signed it into law shortly thereafter.](#)

Alabama becomes [the 38<sup>th</sup> state to ban texting while driving; the District of Columbia also prohibits it.](#) If you're caught, you'll be fined \$25 the first time, \$50 if they catch you doing it again. If you're hard-headed enough to be caught doing it a third time, look forward to a \$75 fine. Each instance will also result in a two-point violation on your driving record.

Then again, you should have already stopped texting while driving here in Birmingham since [the City Council unanimously passed a ban back in July 2010](#) (just months after [UAB hosted a statewide summit on distracted driving the previous December](#)).

**Photo:** Governor of Alabama's Press Office.