



## News Release

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### VIRGINIA SAFETY LAWS CHANGE FOR THE BETTER ON JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>

**VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (June 25, 2013)** – The first of July will usher in stronger traffic safety laws to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, laws concerning texting while driving, provisional licensing, and the use of mopeds will improve in ways that AAA Tidewater believes will save lives on Virginia's roadways.

Beginning July 1, 2013, Virginia will become the 37<sup>th</sup> state plus Washington D.C., to make 'texting while driving' a primary enforcement offense. This means a police officer does not need another reason to stop a vehicle before enforcing the 'no texting while driving' law. The fines will also go up dramatically with a \$125 fine for a first offense and \$250 for a second or subsequent one. The new law does not affect using a cell phone for making a call, and drivers will still be able to text while the vehicle is parked or stopped. "Making texting while driving primary enforcement will raise awareness of the dangers of distracted driving," said Georjeane Blumling, Ph.D., Vice President for AAA Tidewater Virginia, "Research has shown that taking your eye off the road, your hands off the wheel, and your mind off your driving increases the potential for crashes as much as 400%."

July 1<sup>st</sup> also brings new age restrictions for passengers during the initial year of licensure for teen drivers. Provisional driver's license holders will not be allowed to operate a motor vehicle with more than one passenger under the age of 21 in the vehicle unless the driver is accompanied by a parent or person acting in loco parentis who is occupying a seat beside the driver. Currently the restriction is no more than one person under the age of 18, during the first year of licensure. "Raising the age restriction of passengers decreases the potential distractions for these inexperienced drivers, give them more opportunity to practice their driving skills safely", explained Blumling.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has also addressed the increasing concern over the safety of scooters and mopeds on the roads with stronger regulations. Effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, titling and registration of mopeds will be required, as well as distinctive license plates for low-speed vehicles. The law will also require all moped operators to carry government-issued photo identification and wear a face shield, safety glasses, or goggles if the moped is not equipped with safety glass or a windshield. "Adding required safety equipment and easily recognized plates will make these low speed vehicles safer for their driver as well as more recognizable for the larger vehicles they share the road with" said Blumling.

*As part of North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit [AAA.com](http://AAA.com) and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATidewaterVA](https://twitter.com/AAATidewaterVA).*

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