



# CAROLINE COUNTY Sheriff's Office

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An Accredited Law Enforcement Agency  
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## New Law: "Phone Down"

**Caroline County, Virginia** - As many of you are aware, the General Assembly passed a large number of new laws. As your sheriff, I wanted to make you aware of one change that may impact many of you.

Effective **January 1, 2021**, it will be illegal to hold a handheld personal communications device (e.g., your smartphone) while driving a moving motor vehicle on Virginia highways. This new law is one of many ways the state is buckling down on distracted driving.

**While driving, it will be illegal to hold a mobile device in your hand while doing activities, such as:**

- Holding the phone while talking on the phone
- Dial a phone number
- Send a text message
- Update/browse social media
- Video conference
- Shop online
- Watch movies
- Check the weather
- Play games
- And more.

A person who violates the new law, section [46.2-818.2](#) of the Code of Virginia, is subject to a fine of \$125 for the first offense and \$250 for the second and subsequent offenses. A person who is convicted of reckless driving who was also in violation of 46.2-818.2 when committing the offense can be fined up to \$2,500, up to 12 months in jail, and up to a six month license suspension, but shall be fined a mandatory minimum fine of \$250. A person who violates this law while driving in a highway work zone shall be fined \$250.

This new law was championed by Christina Dempsey and Drive Smart Virginia. Ms. Dempsey devastatingly lost her sister and niece in a motor vehicle crash where a distracted driver, of a long flatbed delivery truck with a fork lift attached, struck her sister's vehicle while it was stopped in traffic.

Please do your part to help make our roadways safer. Pedal Down? Phone down!