

§ 20-137.3. Unlawful use of a mobile phone by persons under 18 years of age.

(a) Definitions. - The following definitions apply in this section:

- (1) Additional technology. - Any technology that provides access to digital media including, but not limited to, a camera, music, the internet, or games. The term does not include email or text messaging.
- (2) Mobile telephone. - A device used by subscribers and other users of wireless telephone service to access the service. The term includes: (i) a device with which a user engages in a call using at least one hand, and (ii) a device that has an internal feature or function, or that is equipped with an attachment or addition, whether or not permanently part of the mobile telephone, by which a user engages in a call without the use of either hand, whether or not the use of either hand is necessary to activate, deactivate, or initiate a function of such telephone.
- (3) Wireless telephone service. - A service that is a two-way real-time voice telecommunications service that is interconnected to a public switched telephone network and is provided by a commercial mobile radio service, as such term is defined by 47 C.F.R. § 20.3.

(b) Offense. - Except as otherwise provided in this section, no person under the age of 18 years shall operate a motor vehicle on a public street or highway or public vehicular area while using a mobile telephone or any additional technology associated with a mobile telephone while the vehicle is in motion. This prohibition shall not apply to the use of a mobile telephone or additional technology in a stationary vehicle.

(c) Seizure. - The provisions of this section shall not be construed as authorizing the seizure or forfeiture of a mobile telephone, unless otherwise provided by law.

(d) Exceptions. - The provisions of subsection (b) of this section shall not apply if the use of a mobile telephone is for the sole purpose of communicating with:

- (1) Any of the following regarding an emergency situation: an emergency response operator; a hospital, physician's office, or health clinic; a public or privately owned ambulance company or service; a fire department; or a law enforcement agency.
- (2) The motor vehicle operator's parent, legal guardian or spouse.

(e) Penalty. - Any person violating this section shall have committed an infraction and shall pay a fine of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00). This offense is an offense for which a defendant may waive the right to a hearing or trial and admit responsibility for the infraction pursuant to G.S. 7A-148. No drivers license points, insurance surcharge, or court costs shall be assessed as a result of a violation of this section. (2006-177, s. 1; 2009-135, s. 1; 2025-25, s. 29(1), (3).)