

## Cruising Into 2014: New Year, New Driving Laws In Illinois

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Two new Illinois laws may impact employers with employees who drive as part of their job duties. Effective Jan. 1, 2014, Illinois drivers can speed up as long as they put their phones down. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will commence changing speed limit signs on designated Illinois Interstates, which will increase the limit from 65 mph to 70 mph. At the same time, use of all hand-held mobile devices will be prohibited.

Changing the speed limit signs is estimated to take two weeks. In the meantime, IDOT is advising drivers to obey the speed limits that are posted. According to a [recent IDOT press release](#), approximately 87 percent of Interstate highways and 98 percent of rural Interstates under IDOT's jurisdiction will see increased speed limits. Approximately 28 percent of the Tollway's 286-mile system will see the increase as well. Notably, under the new law, drivers stopped for speeding may receive an excessive speeding penalty on top of a speeding ticket if law enforcement clocked their speed at 26 mph above the speed limit. Before the new law, the additional penalty was administered if a driver was clocked at 31 mph over the speed limit.

Enforcement of the hand-held devices law will begin immediately. While

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Illinois previously banned texting while driving, the new law prevents all hand-held use, including the use of cell phones for talking. Drivers are, however, permitted under Illinois law to use hands-free devices, including headsets.

Illinois employers with driving employees are encouraged to take note of these new laws and, particularly with respect to the use of mobile devices, ensure that their policies are compliant.