



MICHIGAN STATE POLICE LEGAL UPDATE

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VEHICLE CODE

List of prohibited visual displays in a vehicle expanded and clarified Effective March 7, 2008

The Michigan Vehicle Code, [MCL 257.708b](#), has been amended. That section previously prohibited having a television in a vehicle in view of the driver, but was limited to traditional televisions that could receive a "broadcast."

The amended statute now makes it unlawful to have a "television or other similar electronic device that displays a video image that can be viewed by the operator while the motor vehicle is in motion." This new language now prohibits not only televisions, but also items such as DVD players, laptop computers, and video recording devices with a display screen.

The statute does contain a list of exceptions (items which are permitted in view of the driver), which include:

- Vehicle accessory controls (e.g., audio systems or heating & cooling)
- Vehicle information or navigation systems (limited to information related to travel or safety)
- Research vehicles with a permit from the Secretary of State
- Video displays used to enhance the driver's view (e.g., cameras used when backing)
- Computers and emergency equipment controls in police, fire, and ambulance vehicles.
- Video recording equipment in police vehicles.

Finally, accessory controls and vehicle information or navigation systems (the first two items on the list above) must either be mounted in the dashboard or installed on the

windshield or above the dashboard if they do not interfere with the driver's view or control. Also, they must not be mounted within the "deployment profile" of the vehicle's airbags.

BACK TO BASICS

Tampering with witnesses or evidence

When a victim or witness has been threatened during or after a crime, officers should not consider it simply part of the underlying offense – it may be more serious than that.

Extortion ([MCL 750.213](#)) is a 20-year felony that makes it illegal to threaten injury to compel a person to do, or refrain from doing something they have the legal right to do (including reporting a crime or testifying).

[MCL 750.483a](#) makes it a crime to attempt to prevent a person from reporting a crime or making a statement to police, or to retaliate against someone for doing so. If a threat of injury is involved, violation of this section is a felony.

[MCL 750.122](#) makes it a felony to bribe, threaten, or intimidate a person in order to discourage court attendance, avoid process, or testify falsely.

These sections can be particularly useful for officers investigating a misdemeanor for which they cannot make an immediate arrest (e.g., not committed in their presence). If a suspect has committed one of the felonies above, a warrantless arrest may be an option.

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