

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2001**

**SESSION LAW 2001-331
HOUSE BILL 774**

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR HOW DRIVERS SHALL OPERATE THEIR MOTOR VEHICLES WHEN PASSING PARKED OR STANDING EMERGENCY VEHICLES THAT HAVE THEIR EMERGENCY LIGHTS ILLUMINATED, AND TO REQUIRE RENTAL CAR COMPANIES TO NOTIFY RENTERS OF THE LAW FORBIDDING PASSING OF A STOPPED SCHOOL BUS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 20-157 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(f) When an authorized emergency vehicle as described in subsection (a) of this section is parked or standing within 12 feet of a roadway and is giving a warning signal by appropriate light, the driver of every other approaching vehicle shall, as soon as it is safe and when not otherwise directed by an individual lawfully directing traffic, do one of the following:

- (1) Move the vehicle into a lane that is not the lane nearest the parked or standing authorized emergency vehicle and continue traveling in that lane until safely clear of the authorized emergency vehicle. This paragraph applies only if the roadway has at least two lanes for traffic proceeding in the direction of the approaching vehicle and if the approaching vehicle may change lanes safely and without interfering with any vehicular traffic.
- (2) Slow the vehicle, maintaining a safe speed for traffic conditions, and operate the vehicle at a reduced speed until completely past the authorized emergency vehicle. This paragraph applies only if the roadway has only one lane for traffic proceeding in the direction of the approaching vehicle or if the approaching vehicle may not change lanes safely and without interfering with any vehicular traffic.

Violation of this subsection shall not be negligence per se."

SECTION 2. Article 28 of Chapter 66 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 66-207. Rental car companies assist in publicizing law.

(a) A rental car company shall notify renters of the law requiring motorists to stop for and not pass stopped school buses that are properly marked and designated and that are receiving or discharging passengers. The Division of Motor Vehicles shall design a written notification in English, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish and the notification shall be no more than one side of a page. The Division of Motor Vehicles shall also develop a design for use on placards under subdivisions (b)(2) and (b)(3) of this section. The design may be used or adapted by the rental car company. The placards shall consist of the words "It is unlawful in North Carolina to pass a school bus that is stopped and receiving or discharging passengers.", or a visual symbol indicating passing a stopped school bus is unlawful in North Carolina, or both. The Division of Motor Vehicles shall publish the written notification and the design for placards on the Internet and rental car companies shall obtain both by downloading and printing them from that source.

(b) The notification required under subsection (a) of this section may be made either:

- (1) By handing each renter who presents an International Driver Permit with a copy of the written notification prepared by the Division of Motor Vehicles under subsection (a) of this section;
- (2) If the rental car company operates airport shuttle buses to transport renters to pick up vehicles, by posting on each bus at least one placard containing a written notification or visual symbol, or both; or
- (3) If the rental car company operates a counter at which renters pick up documentation, by posting on that counter or at a place easily visible from the counter at least one placard containing a written notification or visual symbol, or both.

Each placard that contains a written notification shall provide that information in all the languages listed in subsection (a) of this section.

(c) There shall be no civil or criminal liability in negligence nor shall an action under G.S. 66-206 apply for any car rental company that fails to provide the information or post the placard required by this section."

SECTION 3. Section 2 of this act becomes effective December 1, 2001. The remaining sections of this act become effective October 1, 2001.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 24th day of July, 2001.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

s/ James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley
Governor

Approved 11:26 a.m. this 2nd day of August, 2001