

Article 7.

Miscellaneous Provisions Relating to Motor Vehicles.

§ 20-216. Passing horses or other draft animals.

Any person operating a motor vehicle shall use reasonable care when approaching or passing a horse or other draft animal whether ridden or otherwise under control. (1917, c. 140, s. 15; C.S., s. 2616; 1969, c. 401.)

§ 20-217. Motor vehicles to stop for properly marked and designated school buses in certain instances; evidence of identity of driver.

(a) When a school bus is displaying its mechanical stop signal or flashing red lights and the bus is stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging passengers, the driver of any other vehicle that approaches the school bus from any direction on the same street, highway, or public vehicular area shall bring that other vehicle to a full stop and shall remain stopped. The driver of the other vehicle shall not proceed to move, pass, or attempt to pass the school bus until after the mechanical stop signal has been withdrawn, the flashing red stoplights have been turned off, and the bus has started to move.

(b) For the purpose of this section, a school bus includes a public school bus transporting children or school personnel, a public school bus transporting senior citizens under G.S. 115C-243, or a privately owned bus transporting children. This section applies only in the event the school bus bears upon the front and rear a plainly visible sign containing the words "school bus."

(c) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the driver of a vehicle traveling in the opposite direction from the school bus, upon any road, highway or city street that has been divided into two roadways, so constructed as to separate vehicular traffic between the two roadways by an intervening space (including a center lane for left turns if the roadway consists of at least four more lanes) or by a physical barrier, need not stop upon meeting and passing any school bus that has stopped in the roadway across the dividing space or physical barrier.

(d) It shall be unlawful for any school bus driver to stop and receive or discharge passengers or for any principal or superintendent of any school, routing a school bus, to authorize the driver of any school bus to stop and receive or discharge passengers upon any roadway described by subsection (c) of this section where passengers would be required to cross the roadway to reach their destination or to board the bus; provided, that passengers may be discharged or received at points where pedestrians and vehicular traffic are controlled by adequate stop-and-go traffic signals.

(e) Except as provided in subsection (g) of this section, any person violating this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and shall pay a minimum fine of five hundred dollars (\$500.00). A person who violates subsection (a) of this section shall not receive a prayer for judgment continued under any circumstances.

(f) Expired.

(g) Any person who willfully violates subsection (a) of this section and strikes any person shall be guilty of a Class I felony and shall pay a minimum fine of one thousand

two hundred fifty dollars (\$1,250). Any person who willfully violates subsection (a) of this section and strikes any person, resulting in the death of that person, shall be guilty of a Class H felony and shall pay a minimum fine of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500).

(g1) The Division shall revoke, for a period of one year, the drivers license of a person convicted of a second misdemeanor violation under this section within a three-year period. The Division shall revoke, for a period of two years, the drivers license of a person convicted of a Class I felony violation under this section. The Division shall revoke, for a period of three years, the drivers license of a person convicted of a Class H felony violation under this section. The Division shall permanently revoke the drivers license of (i) a person convicted of a second felony violation under this section within any period of time and (ii) a person convicted of a third misdemeanor violation under this section within any period of time.

In the case of a first felony conviction under this section, the licensee may apply to the sentencing court for a limited driving privilege after a period of six months of revocation, provided the person's drivers license has not also been revoked or suspended under any other provision of law. A limited driving privilege issued under this subsection shall be valid for the period of revocation remaining in the same manner and under the terms and conditions prescribed in G.S. 20-16.1(b). If the person's drivers license is revoked or suspended under any other statute, the limited driving privilege issued pursuant to this subsection is invalid.

In the case of a permanent revocation of a person's drivers license for committing a third misdemeanor violation under this section within any period of time, the person may apply for a drivers license after two years. The Division may, with or without a hearing, issue a new drivers license upon satisfactory proof that the former licensee has not been convicted of a moving violation under this Chapter or the laws of another state. The Division may impose any restrictions or conditions on the new drivers license that the Division considers appropriate. Any conditions or restrictions imposed by the Division shall not exceed two years.

In the case of a permanent revocation of a person's drivers license for committing a second Class I felony violation under this section within any period of time, the person may apply for a drivers license after three years. The Division may, with or without a hearing, issue a new drivers license upon satisfactory proof that the former licensee has not been convicted of a moving violation under this Chapter or the laws of another state. The Division may impose any restrictions or conditions on the new drivers license that the Division considers appropriate. Any conditions or restrictions imposed by the Division shall not exceed three years.

Any person whose drivers license is revoked under this section is disqualified pursuant to G.S. 20-17.4 from driving a commercial motor vehicle for the period of time in which the person's drivers license remains revoked under this section.

(g2) Pursuant to G.S. 20-54, failure of a person to pay any fine or costs imposed pursuant to this section shall result in the Division withholding the registration renewal of a motor vehicle registered in that person's name. The clerk of superior court in the county

in which the case was disposed shall notify the Division of any person who fails to pay a fine or costs imposed pursuant to this section within 40 days of the date specified in the court's judgment, as required by G.S. 20-24.2(a)(2). The Division shall continue to withhold the registration renewal of a motor vehicle until the clerk of superior court notifies the Division that the person has satisfied the conditions of G.S. 20-24.1(b) applicable to the person's case. The provisions of this subsection shall be in addition to any other actions the Division may take to enforce the payment of any fine imposed pursuant to this section.

(h) Automated school bus safety cameras, as defined in G.S. 115C-242.1, may be used to detect and prosecute violations of this section. Any photograph or video recorded by an automated school bus safety camera shall, if consistent with the North Carolina Rules of Evidence, be admissible as evidence in any proceeding alleging a violation of subsection (a) of this section. Failure to produce a photograph or video recorded by an automated school bus safety camera shall not preclude prosecution under this section. (1925, c. 265; 1943, c. 767; 1947, c. 527; 1955, c. 1365; 1959, c. 909; 1965, c. 370; 1969, c. 952; 1971, c. 245, s. 1; 1973, c. 1330, s. 35; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1280, s. 4; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1323; 1983, c. 779, s. 1; 1985, c. 700, s. 1; 1991, c. 290, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 382; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1998-149, s. 10; 2005-204, s. 1; 2006-160, s. 1; 2006-259, s. 11(a); 2007-382, s. 1; 2009-147, ss. 1, 2; 2013-293, s. 2; 2017-188, s. 4; 2019-243, s. 8.)

§ 20-217.1: Repealed by Session Laws 1983, c. 779, s. 2.

§ 20-218. Standard qualifications for school bus drivers; speed limit for school buses and school activity buses.

(a) Qualifications. – No person shall drive a school bus over the highways or public vehicular areas of North Carolina while it is occupied by one or more child passengers unless the person furnishes to the superintendent of the schools of the county in which the bus shall be operated a certificate from any representative duly designated by the Commissioner and from the Director of Transportation or a designee of the Director in charge of school buses in the county showing that the person has been examined by them and is fit and competent to drive a school bus over the highways and public vehicular areas of the State. The driver of a school bus must be at least 18 years of age and hold a Class A, B, or C commercial drivers license and a school bus driver's certificate. The driver of a school activity bus must meet the same qualifications as a school bus driver or must have a license appropriate for the class of vehicle being driven.

(b) Speed Limits. – It is unlawful to drive a school bus occupied by one or more child passengers over the highways or public vehicular areas of the State at a greater rate of speed than 45 miles per hour. It is unlawful to drive a school activity bus occupied by one or more child passengers over the highways or public vehicular areas of North Carolina at a greater rate of speed than 55 miles per hour.

(c) Punishment. – A person who violates this section commits a Class 3 misdemeanor. (1937, c. 397, ss. 1-3; 1941, c. 21; 1943, c. 440; 1945, c. 216; 1957, cc. 139, 595; 1971, c. 293; 1977, c. 791, ss. 1, 2; c. 1102; 1979, c. 31, ss. 1, 2; c. 667, s. 36; 1981, c. 30; 1987, c. 337, s. 1; 1989, c. 558, s. 1; c. 771, s. 6; 1991, c. 726, s. 22; 1993, c. 217, s. 1; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 761, s. 20; 2009-550, s. 3.2.)

§ 20-218.1: Repealed by Session Laws 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 761, s. 21.

§ 20-218.2. Speed limit for nonprofit activity buses.

It is unlawful to drive an activity bus that is owned by a nonprofit organization and is transporting persons in connection with nonprofit activities over the highways or public vehicular areas of North Carolina at a greater rate of speed than 55 miles per hour. A person who violates this section commits a Class 3 misdemeanor. (1969, c. 1000, s. 2; 1987, c. 337, s. 2; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 761, s. 23.)

§ 20-219: Repealed by Session Laws 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 761, s. 24.

§ 20-219.1. Repealed by Session Laws 1971, c. 294, s. 2.

§ 20-219.2. Removal of unauthorized vehicles from private lots.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person other than the owner or lessee of a privately owned or leased parking space to park a motor or other vehicle in such private parking space without the express permission of the owner or lessee of such space if the private parking lot is clearly designated as such by legible signs no smaller than 24 inches by 24 inches prominently displayed at all entrances thereto, displaying the current name and current phone number of the towing and storage company, and, if individually owned or leased, the parking lot or spaces within the lot are clearly marked by signs setting forth the name of each individual lessee or owner. A vehicle parked in a privately owned parking space in violation of this section may be removed from such space upon the written request of the parking space owner or lessee to a place of storage and the registered owner of such motor vehicle shall become liable for removal and storage charges. Any person who removes a vehicle pursuant to this section shall not be held liable for damages for the removal of the vehicle to the owner, lienholder or other person legally entitled to the possession of the vehicle removed; however, any person who intentionally or negligently damages a vehicle in the removal of such vehicle, or intentionally or negligently inflicts injury upon any person in the removal of such vehicle, may be held liable for damages. The provisions of this section shall not apply until 72 hours after the required signs are posted.

(a1) If any vehicle is removed pursuant to this section and there is a place of storage within 15 miles, the vehicle shall not be transported for storage more than 15 miles from the place of removal. For all other vehicles, the vehicle shall not be transported for storage more than 25 miles from the place of removal.

(a2) Any person who tows or stores a vehicle subject to this section shall inform the owner in writing at the time of retrieval of the vehicle that the owner has the right to pay the amount of the lien asserted, request immediate possession, and contest the lien for towing charges pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 44A-4.

(a3) Any person who tows or stores a vehicle subject to this section shall not require any person retrieving a vehicle to sign any waiver of rights or other similar document as a

condition of the release of the person's vehicle, other than a form acknowledging the release and receipt of the vehicle.

(b) Any person violating any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of an infraction and upon conviction shall be only penalized not less than one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) in the discretion of the court.

(c) This section shall apply only to the Counties of Craven, Cumberland, Dare, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Orange, Richmond, Robeson, Wake, Wilson and municipalities in those counties, and to the Cities of Durham, Jacksonville, Charlotte and Fayetteville.

(d) The provisions of this section shall not be interpreted to preempt the authority of any county or municipality to enact ordinances regulating towing from private lots, as authorized by general law. (1969, cc. 173, 288; 1971, c. 986; 1973, c. 183; c. 981, s. 1; c. 1330, s. 36; 1975, c. 575; 1979, c. 380; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1119; 1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1251, s. 3; 1989, c. 417; c. 644, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 383; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2008-68, s. 1; 2010-134, s. 1; 2013-190, s. 1; 2013-241, s. 2.)

§ 20-219.3. Removal of unauthorized vehicles from gasoline service station premises.

(a) No motor vehicle shall be left for more than 48 hours upon the premises of any gasoline service station without the consent of the owner or operator of the service station.

(b) The registered owner of any motor vehicle left unattended upon the premises of a service station in violation of subsection (a) shall be given notice by the owner or operator of said station of said violation. The notice given shall be by certified mail return receipt requested addressed to the registered owner of the motor vehicle.

(c) Upon the expiration of 10 days from the return of the receipt showing that the notice was received by the addressee, such vehicle left on the premises of a service station in violation of this section may be removed from the station premises to a place of storage and the registered owner of such vehicle shall become liable for the reasonable removal and storage charges and the vehicle subject to the storage lien created by G.S. 44A-1 et seq. Any person who removes a vehicle pursuant to this section shall not be held liable for damages for the removal of the vehicle to the owner, lienholder or other person legally entitled to the possession of the vehicle removed; however, any person who intentionally or negligently damages a vehicle in the removal of such vehicle, or intentionally or negligently inflicts injury upon any person in the removal of such vehicle, may be held liable for damages.

(d) In the alternative, the station owner or operator may charge for storage, assert a lien, and dispose of the vehicle under the terms of G.S. 44A-4(b) through (g). The proceeds from the sale of the vehicle shall be disbursed as provided in G.S. 44A-5. (1971, c. 1220; 1973, c. 1330, s. 36; 1989, c. 644, s. 2.)

§ 20-219.4. Public vehicular area designated.

(a) Any area of private property used for vehicular traffic may be designated by the property owner as a public vehicular area by registering the area with the Department of Transportation and by erecting signs identifying the area as a public vehicular area in conformity with rules adopted by the Department of Transportation.

(b) The Department of Transportation shall serve as a registry for registrations of public vehicular areas permitted under this section. The Department shall adopt rules for registration requirements and procedures. The Department shall also adopt rules governing the size and locations of signs designating public vehicular areas by private property owners in accordance with this section. These rules shall ensure that signs erected pursuant to this provision shall be placed so as to provide reasonable notice to motorists.

(c) The Department shall charge a fee not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per registration request authorized by this section. The Department may also charge the reasonable cost for furnishing a certified copy of a registration when requested. Funds collected under this subsection shall be used to cover the cost of maintaining the registry. (2001-441, s. 2.)

§ 20-219.5. Dealer liability for third-party motor vehicle history reports.

A motor vehicle dealer, as defined in G.S. 20-286(11), and the dealer's owners, shareholders, officers, employees, and agents who, in conjunction with the actual or potential sale or lease of a motor vehicle, arrange to provide, provide, or otherwise make available to a vehicle purchaser, lessee, or other person any third-party motor vehicle history report, shall not be liable to the vehicle purchaser, lessee, or other person for any errors, omissions, or other inaccuracies contained in the third-party motor vehicle history report that are not based on information provided directly to the preparer of the third-party motor vehicle history report by that dealer. For purposes of this section, a "third-party motor vehicle history report" means any information prepared by a party other than the dealer, relating to any one or more of the following: vehicle ownership or titling history; liens on the vehicle; vehicle service, maintenance, or repair history; vehicle condition; or vehicle accident or collision history. (2019-181, s. 2.)