



CONNECTICUT'S LAWS AND COMPARATIVE STATE PENALTIES FOR ILLEGALLY PASSING A SCHOOL BUS

By: Heather Poole, Legislative Analyst II
Carease M Gadson, Senior Legislative Secretary

CONNECTICUT'S LAWS AND PENALTIES

[CGS § 14-279](#) requires the operator of any vehicle or motor vehicle to stop at least 10 feet from the front or rear of a school bus when the bus is displaying flashing red lights, except when directed otherwise by a traffic officer.

A fine of \$450 is assessed for the first offense. For each subsequent offense, the penalty is a fine of \$500 to \$1,000, up to 30 days in jail, or both.

The Department of Motor Vehicles also assesses four points against the driver's license of a motorist for each violation of the law.

ISSUE

What are Connecticut's laws on passing stopped school buses and the penalties for doing so, and compare Connecticut's penalties to those in other states.

SUMMARY

State traffic laws generally are fully or partially adopted in conformity with the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances' (NCUTLO) Uniform Vehicle Code, which was written and recommended as a national standard for traffic laws. Section [11-705](#) requires a driver meeting or overtaking any school bus from either direction to stop before reaching the school bus when the flashing red lights are actuated. Drivers may proceed when the bus resumes moving or the lights are turned off.

Connecticut imposes a fine of \$450 for a first offense and a fine of \$500 to \$1,000, up to 30 days in jail, or both for subsequent offenses. Penalties in other states vary greatly. All states impose a fine for each offense, but fines range from \$30 to up to \$10,000. Several states permit a license suspension or prison sentence for first violations and most permit them for subsequent violations, but the suspension or sentence length varies.



CONNECTICUT

By law, except when otherwise directed by a traffic officer, a motorist approaching a school bus displaying its flashing red signal lights must immediately stop his or her vehicle at least 10 feet from the front or rear of the bus and remain stopped until the bus no longer displays its red signal lights ([CGS § 14-279](#)). At intersections, motorists are prohibited from turning toward a school bus that is receiving or discharging passengers.

Under the law, police must issue a written warning or a summons to the owner of a vehicle who illegally passes a school bus “upon a written report from any school bus operator...specifying the license plate number, color and type of any vehicle observed by such operator or recorded by a camera affixed to such school bus.” The driver's report must also note the date, approximate time, and location of the violation.

Any person who violates this law faces a \$450 fine for the first offense. For each subsequent offense, a violator faces a fine of \$500 to \$1,000, up to 30 days in jail, or both. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) also assesses four points against a motorist's driver's license each time he or she is convicted of illegally passing a school bus. DMV suspends a driver's license after a person receives more than 10 points ([Conn. Agencies Reg., § 14-137a-5, et seq.](#)).

OTHER STATES' LAWS AND PENALTIES

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) provides a “[Stop Law Narrative](#)” on their website, which was compiled by School Training Solutions in 2012. The report is a guide to state laws and was compiled from information from each state's DMV manual.

Penalties for illegally passing a school bus vary greatly among states. For a first conviction, we found 17 states that permit a prison sentence, nine states that permit a license suspension for up to 30 days or more, and 10 states that permit a fine of up to \$1,000 or more. Generally, states that permit a prison sentence or license suspension may do so in conjunction with a fine. See Tables 1, 2, and 3 for the specific states permitting each penalty, listed in descending order by length or maximum amount of the penalty.

Table 1: States Permitting a Prison Sentence for a First Conviction and Sentence Length

State	Incarceration Period
Mississippi	Up to one year
Missouri	Up to one year
Louisiana	Up to six months
West Virginia	Up to six months
Alaska	Up to 90 days
Arkansas	Up to 90 days
Colorado	10 to 90 days
New Mexico	Up to 90 days
Delaware	30 to 60 days
Kentucky	30 to 60 days
Indiana	Up to 60 days
Iowa	Up to 30 days
New York	Up to 30 days
South Carolina	Up to 30 days
South Dakota	Up to 30 days
Wyoming	Up to 20 days
New Jersey	Up to 15 days

Table 2: States Permitting a License Suspension for a First Conviction and Suspension Length

State	Suspension Period
Arkansas	21 days to one year
Ohio	Up to one year
Oklahoma	Up to one year
Illinois	90 days
Missouri	90 days
Louisiana	30 days
New Hampshire	Up to 30 days
Rhode Island	Up to 30 days
West Virginia	30 days

Table 3: States Permitting a Fine of up to \$1,000 or More for a First Conviction

<i>State</i>	<i>Fine</i>
Indiana	Up to \$10,000
Alaska	Up to \$2,000
Oregon	Up to \$2,000
Texas	\$500 to \$1,250
Arkansas	\$250 to \$1,000
Maryland	Up to \$1,000
Minnesota	\$300 to \$1,000
Missouri	Up to \$1,000
Tennessee	\$250 to \$1,000
Vermont	Up to \$1,000

Table 4 below lists the laws in each state and identifies the penalties we found for illegally passing a stopped school bus. In the instance of a license suspension, the penalty applies to any privilege to drive, including a driver's permit, probationary license, commercial driver's license, or nonresident driving privilege.

The penalties listed in Table 4 are not inclusive. A violation causing an injury to or death of a person is subject to other criminal penalties. Additionally, administrative penalties in the form of points may be assessed against the license of those who violate the law. NASDPTS administered a [2013-2014 survey](#) of state laws on passing a school bus (also known as "stop arm" laws) which indicates the number of points states assess for illegally passing a school bus. The survey found that (1) at least six states assess at least five points, (2) at least four states assess four points, and (3) at least nine states assess three or fewer points.

Table 4: State Laws and Penalties for Illegally Passing a School Bus

State	Statute(s)	Penalties*	
		Fine	Other applicable penalties
Alabama	Ala. Code 1975 §§ 32-5A-154 & 32-5A-8	1 st conviction: \$150 to \$300 2 nd conviction: \$300 to \$500 3 rd conviction: \$500 to \$1,000 4 th and subsequent convictions: \$1,000 to \$3,000	2 nd conviction: 100 hours community service and 30-day license suspension 3 rd conviction: 200 hours of community service and 90-day license suspension 4 th and subsequent convictions: Class C felony conviction and one-year license suspension
Alaska	AS §§ 28.35.145, 28.35.035 & 28.35.135	Up to \$2,000	Up to 90 days in jail
Arizona	AZ ST § 28-857	1 st conviction: Not less than \$250 2 nd conviction within three years: \$750 3 rd and subsequent convictions within three years: \$1,000	2 nd conviction within three years: Up to a six month driving suspension 3 rd and subsequent convictions within three years: Six months to one year license suspension
Arkansas	A.C.A §§ 27-51-1004 & 27-51-1001	\$250 to \$1,000	Up to 90 days in prison; up to 400 hours of community service; 21-day to one-year license suspension
California	CA VEH Code §§ 22454 & 22454.5	1 st conviction: \$150 to \$250 2 nd conviction: \$500 to \$1,000 3 rd conviction: None	3 rd conviction within three years: One-year license suspension
Colorado	C.R.S. §§ 42-4-1903 & 42-4-1701(3)(a)(II)(A)	1 st conviction: \$150 to \$300 2 nd conviction: \$300 to \$1,000	1 st conviction: 10 to 90 days in prison 2 nd conviction: 10 days to one year in prison
Connecticut	CGS § 14-279	1 st conviction: \$450 2 nd and subsequent convictions: \$500 to \$1,000	2 nd and subsequent convictions: Up to 30 days in prison
Delaware	21 Del.C. § 4166	1 st conviction: \$115 to \$230 2 nd and subsequent convictions within three years: \$115 to \$575	1 st conviction: 30 to 60 days in prison 2 nd and subsequent convictions within three years: 60 days to six months in prison
District of Columbia	DCMR 18 § 2209	\$500	
Florida	F.S.A. §§ 316.172 & 318.18(5)(a)	Not less than \$100	2 nd and subsequent convictions: 90- to 180-day license suspension

Note: *Penalties current through the 2015 regular session.

Table 4 (continued)

State	Statute(s)	Penalties*	
		Fine	Other applicable penalties
Georgia	Ga. Code Ann., § 40-6-163	1 st conviction: \$300 2 nd conviction: \$750 3 rd and subsequent convictions within a five-year period: \$1,000	
Hawaii	HRS § 291C-95	Up to \$500	Community service
Idaho	I.C. § 49-1422	\$100 to \$500	
Illinois	625 ILCS 5/11-1414	1 st conviction: \$150 2 nd and subsequent convictions: \$500	1 st conviction: Three month license suspension 2 nd and subsequent convictions within five years: One year license suspension
Indiana	IC §§ 9-21-12-1, 9-21-12-9, 34-28-5-4 & 35-50-3-4	Up to \$10,000	Up to 60 days in prison
Iowa	I.C.A. § 321.372	1 st conviction: \$250 to \$675 2 nd and subsequent convictions: \$315 to \$1,875	1 st conviction: Up to 30 days in prison 2 nd and subsequent convictions: Up to one year in prison
Kansas	K.S.A. §§ 8-1556 & 8-2118	\$315	
Kentucky	KRS §§ 189.370 & 189.990(5)	1 st conviction: \$100 to \$200 2 nd and subsequent convictions within three years: \$300 to \$500	1 st conviction: 30 to 60 days in prison 2 nd and subsequent convictions within three years: 60 days to six months in prison
Louisiana	LSA-R.S. 32:80	\$100 to \$500	Up to six months in prison and: 1 st conviction: 30-day license suspension 2 nd conviction: 60-day license suspension 3 rd conviction: One-year license suspension
Maine	ME ST 29-A § 2308	Not less than \$250	2 nd and subsequent convictions within three years: 30-day license suspension
Maryland	MD TRAN §§ 21-706 & 27-101(g)	Up to \$1,000	

Note: *Penalties current through the 2015 regular session.

Table 4 (continued)

State	Statute(s)	Penalties*	
		Fine	Other applicable penalties
Massachusetts	MA ST 90 § 14	1st conviction: Not less than \$250 2nd conviction: \$500 to \$1,000 3rd and subsequent convictions: \$1,000 to \$2,000	2nd conviction: Six-month license suspension 3rd and subsequent convictions: One-year license suspension
Michigan	MI ST §§ 257.682 & 257.907	\$100 to \$500, and costs of up to \$100	Up to 100 hours of community service at a school
Minnesota	M.S.A §§ 169.444 & 609.02	Misdemeanor: \$300 to \$1,000 Gross misdemeanor: Up to \$3,000	Misdemeanor: Up to 90 days in prison
Mississippi	Miss. Code Ann. § 63-3-615	1st conviction: \$350 to \$750 2nd and subsequent convictions within five years: \$750 to \$1,500	1st conviction: Up to one year in prison 2nd and subsequent convictions within five years: Up to one year in prison and 90-day license suspension
Missouri	MO St. §§ 304.050, 304.070, 558.011 & 560.016	Up to \$1,000	1st conviction: Up to one year in prison, 90-day license suspension 2nd and subsequent convictions: Up to one year in prison, 120-day license suspension
Montana	MT Code Ann. § 61-8-351	Up to \$500	
Nebraska	Neb.Rev.St. §§ 60-6,175 & 28-106	\$500	
Nevada	NRS 484B.353	1st conviction: \$250 to \$500 2nd conviction within one year: \$250 to \$500 3rd and subsequent convictions within two years: Up to \$1,000	2nd conviction within one year: Six-month license suspension 3rd and subsequent convictions within two years: Up to one-year license suspension
New Hampshire	RSA § 265:54	1st conviction: \$500 plus penalty assessment 2nd and subsequent convictions: \$500 to \$1,200 plus penalty assessment	1st conviction: Up to 30-day license suspension 2nd conviction: 30-day license suspension 3rd and subsequent convictions: 30- to 120-day license suspension
New Jersey	NJ ST 39:4-128.1	1st conviction: At least \$100 2nd and subsequent convictions: At least \$250	1st conviction: Up to 15 days in prison or community service for 15 days 2nd conviction: Up to 15 days in prison
New Mexico	N.M.S.A. 1978, §§ 66-7-347 & 66-8-7	Up to \$300	Up to 90 days in prison

Note: *Penalties current through the 2015 regular session.

Table 4 (continued)

State	Statute(s)	Penalties*	
		Fine	Other applicable penalties
New York	NY VAT § 1174	1st conviction: \$250 to \$400 2nd conviction within three years: \$600 to \$750 3rd and subsequent convictions within three years: \$750 to \$1,000	1st conviction: Up to 30 days in prison 2nd or subsequent convictions within three years: Up to six months in prison
North Carolina	N.C.G.S.A. § 20-217	Not less than \$500	2nd conviction: If within three years of first conviction, one year license suspension
North Dakota	NDCC §§ 39-10-46 & 39-06.1-06	\$100	
Ohio	R.C. §§ 4511.75 & 4510.02	Up to \$500	Up to one-year license suspension
Oklahoma	Ok.St.Ann. §§ 47-11-705 & 47-6-205(F)	\$100	Up to one-year license suspension
Oregon	ORS §§ 811.155 & 153.018	Up to \$2,000	
Pennsylvania	75 Pa.C.S.A. § 3345	\$250	
Rhode Island	G.L.R.I. 31-20-12	1 st conviction: Up to \$300 2 nd conviction: \$300 to \$500	1 st conviction: Up to 30-day license suspension 2 nd conviction: One-year license suspension
South Carolina	SC ST §§ 56-5-2770 & 56-5-2780	1st conviction: At least \$500 2nd and subsequent convictions: \$2,000 to \$5,000	1st conviction: Up to 30 days in prison 2nd and subsequent convictions: 30 to 60 days in prison
South Dakota	SDCL §§ 32-32-6 & 22-6-2	Up to \$500	Up to 30 days in prison
Tennessee	T.C.A. 55-8-151	\$250 to \$1,000	
Texas	V.T.C.A., Transportation Code § 545.0666	1st conviction: \$500 to \$1,250 2nd and subsequent convictions within five years: \$1,000 to \$2,000	2nd and subsequent convictions: Up to a 6-month license suspension
Utah	U.C.A. 1953 § 41-6a-1302	1st conviction: \$100 2nd conviction within three years: \$200 3rd and subsequent conviction within three years: \$500	Compensatory service in lieu of the fine
Vermont	23 V.S.A. §§ 1075 & 2302	Up to \$1,000	

Note: *Penalties current through the 2015 regular session.

Table 4 (continued)

State	Statute(s)	Penalties*	
		Fine	Other applicable penalties
Virginia	VA Code Ann. § 46.2-844	\$250	
Washington	RCWA 46.61.370	Up to \$500	
West Virginia	W.Va Code, § 17C-12-7	1st conviction: \$150 to \$500 2nd conviction: \$500 3rd and subsequent convictions: \$500	1st conviction: Up to six months in jail, 30-day license suspension 2nd conviction: Up to six months in jail, 90-day license suspension 3rd and subsequent convictions: 24 hours to six months in jail, 180-day license suspension
Wisconsin	W.S.A §§ 346.48 & 346.49	\$30 to \$300	
Wyoming	W.S. 1977 §§ 31-5-507 & 31-5-1201	1st conviction: Up to \$200 2nd conviction within one year: Up to \$300 3rd and subsequent convictions within one year: Up to \$500	1st conviction: Up to 20 days in prison 2nd conviction within one year: Up to 30 days in prison 3rd and subsequent convictions within one year: Up to six months in prison

Note: *Penalties current through the 2015 regular session.

HYPERLINKS

National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices 2015:

<http://www.ncutcd.org/doc/Chapter1&11OriginalW5415%20PDF%20File%20Recd%205-7-15.pdf>

National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services:

<http://www.nasdpts.org/>

HP/CMG:bs