



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 408

January Session, 2021

House Bill No. 5420

House of Representatives, April 13, 2021

The Committee on Transportation reported through REP. LEMAR of the 96th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY AT INOPERATIVE TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNALS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2021*) The driver of a vehicle
2 approaching an intersection controlled by a traffic control signal that is
3 inoperative shall stop such vehicle and proceed in the same manner as
4 though a stop sign were facing in each direction at the intersection,
5 unless otherwise directed by a police officer. Violation of this section
6 shall be an infraction.

7 Sec. 2. Section 14-297 of the general statutes is repealed and the
8 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

9 Terms used in this chapter shall be construed as follows, unless
10 another construction is clearly apparent from the language or context in
11 which the term is used or unless the construction is inconsistent with
12 the manifest intention of the General Assembly:

13 (1) The following terms shall be construed as they are defined in
14 section 14-1: "Authorized emergency vehicle", "class 1 electric bicycle",
15 "class 2 electric bicycle", "class 3 electric bicycle", "driver", "electric

16 bicycle", "electric foot scooter", "head lamp", "highway", ["intersection"],
17 "limited access highway", "motor vehicle", "number plate", "operator",
18 "person", "rotary" or "roundabout", "shoulder", "stop", "truck" and
19 "vehicle";

20 (2) "Crosswalk" means that portion of a highway ordinarily included
21 within the prolongation or connection of the lateral lines of sidewalks at
22 intersections, or any portion of a highway distinctly indicated, by lines
23 or other markings on the surface, as a crossing for pedestrians, except
24 such prolonged or connecting lines from an alley across a street;

25 (3) "Intersection" has the same meaning as provided in section 14-212;

26 [(3)] (4) "Official traffic control devices" means all signs, signals,
27 markings and devices consistent with the provisions of this chapter and
28 placed or erected, for the purpose of regulating, warning or guiding
29 traffic, by authority of a public body or official having jurisdiction;

30 [(4)] (5) "Parking" means the standing of a vehicle, whether occupied
31 or not, on a highway, except it shall not include the temporary standing
32 of a vehicle for the purpose of and while engaged in receiving or
33 discharging passengers or loading or unloading merchandise or while
34 in obedience to traffic regulations or traffic signs or signals;

35 [(5)] (6) "Traffic" means pedestrians, vehicles and other conveyances
36 while using any highway for the purpose of travel;

37 [(6)] (7) "Traffic authority" means the board of police commissioners
38 of any city, town or borough, or the city or town manager, the chief of
39 police, the superintendent of police or any legally elected or appointed
40 official or board, or any official having similar powers and duties, of any
41 city, town or borough that has no board of police commissioners but has
42 a regularly appointed force, or the board of selectmen of any town in
43 which there is no city or borough with a regularly appointed police
44 force, except that, with respect to state highways and bridges, "traffic
45 authority" means the Office of the State Traffic Administration,
46 provided nothing contained in this section shall be construed to limit or

47 detract from the jurisdiction or authority of the Office of the State Traffic
 48 Administration to adopt regulations establishing a uniform system of
 49 traffic control signals, devices, signs and markings as provided in
 50 section 14-298, and the requirement that no installation of any traffic
 51 control signal light shall be made by any city, town or borough until the
 52 installation has been approved by the Office of the State Traffic
 53 Administration as provided in section 14-299;

54 [(7)] (8) "Traffic control sign" means any sign bearing a message with
 55 respect to the stopping or to the rate of speed of vehicles; and

56 [(8)] (9) "Traffic control signal" means any device, whether operated
 57 manually, electrically or mechanically, by which traffic is alternately
 58 directed to stop and to proceed.

59 Sec. 3. Subsection (b) of section 14-25d of the general statutes is
 60 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
 61 *1, 2021*):

62 (b) Any traffic authority, as defined in [subdivision (6) of] section 14-
 63 297, as amended by this act, may impose restrictions or prohibitions
 64 concerning the use and operation of any such amphibious vehicle
 65 registered as a motor bus, on any highway or bridge under its
 66 jurisdiction as such traffic authority determines to be necessary for the
 67 protection of the passengers of such amphibious vehicle and highway
 68 users.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	14-297
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	14-25d(b)

TRA *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 22 \$	FY 23 \$
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Gain	Minimal	Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill creates a new infraction for drivers who fail to stop when approaching an intersection controlled by a traffic signal that is inoperative. To the extent that violations occur, and offenders are fined, the bill results in potential minimal revenue to the General Fund. Infractions are not crimes and are punishable by fines that usually range from \$100 to \$300.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of violations.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 5420****AN ACT CONCERNING DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY AT INOPERATIVE TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNALS.****SUMMARY**

This bill requires drivers, when approaching intersections with inoperative traffic signals, to stop their vehicles and proceed as though a stop sign were facing in each direction at the intersection (e.g., a four-way stop), unless a police officer directs them otherwise. The bill makes violating this requirement an infraction (see BACKGROUND).

Under current law, if a traffic signal is inoperative, the intersection becomes “uncontrolled” and the standard right-of-way rules apply. These rules vary based on the (1) location and (2) driver’s intended actions. For example:

1. at intersections where two or more roads cross each other, a driver must yield to a vehicle on the right if both vehicles arrive at the intersection at about the same time (CGS § 14-245);
2. at junctions (i.e., where a road joins another road but does not cross it), a driver on the joining road must yield to drivers on the other road if both vehicles arrive at about the same time (CGS § 14-246a); and
3. drivers intending to turn left at an intersection or into a driveway or alley must yield to vehicles approaching from the opposite direction (CGS § 14-242(e)).

By law, and under the bill, an “intersection” is generally the area within the extension of the lateral curb lines of two or more roads that join at an angle, whether or not one of the roads crosses the other (CGS § 14-212(4)).

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes, including one to the cross-reference for the definition of “intersection.”

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

BACKGROUND

Infractions

Infractions are punishable by fines, usually set by Superior Court judges, of between \$35 and \$90, plus a \$20 or \$35 surcharge and an additional fee based on the fine’s amount. There may also be other applicable charges depending on the type of infraction. For example, certain motor vehicle infractions trigger a Special Transportation Fund surcharge of 50% of the fine. With the various additional charges, the total amount due can be over \$300 but often is less than \$100.

An infraction is not a crime, and violators can pay the fine by mail without making a court appearance.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 35 Nay 0 (03/24/2021)