



General Assembly

January Session, 2023

Raised Bill No. 6583

LCO No. 3538



Referred to Committee on PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

Introduced by:

(PS)

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF EMERGENCY LIGHTS BY
VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION AND COMPANY
MEMBERS AND ELECTED CONSTABLES.***

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

1 Section 1. Section 14-96q of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

3 (a) A permit is required for the use of colored or flashing lights on all
4 motor vehicles or equipment specified in this section except: (1) Motor
5 vehicles not registered in this state used for transporting or escorting
6 any vehicle or load, or combinations thereof, which is either oversize or
7 overweight, or both, when operating under a permit issued by the
8 Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to section 14-270; or (2)
9 motor vehicles or equipment that are (A) equipped with lights in
10 accordance with this section, (B) owned or leased by the federal
11 government, the state of Connecticut, or any other state, commonwealth
12 or local municipality, and (C) registered to such governmental entity.
13 When used in this section the term "flashing" shall be considered to
14 include the term "revolving".

15 (b) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, or such other person
16 specifically identified in this section, [is authorized to] may issue
17 permits for the use of colored or flashing lights on vehicles in accordance
18 with this section, at the commissioner's or such person's discretion. Any
19 person, firm or corporation other than the state or any metropolitan
20 district, town, city or borough shall pay an annual permit fee of twenty
21 dollars to the commissioner for each such vehicle. Such fee shall apply
22 only to permits issued by the commissioner.

23 (c) A flashing blue light or lights may be used on a motor vehicle
24 operated by an active member of a volunteer fire department or
25 company or an active member of an organized civil preparedness
26 auxiliary fire company who has been issued a permit by the chief
27 executive officer of such department or company to use a flashing blue
28 light or lights while on the way to or at the scene of a fire or other
29 emergency requiring such member's services. Such permit shall be on a
30 form provided by the commissioner and may be revoked by such chief
31 executive officer or successor. The chief executive officer of each
32 volunteer fire department or company or organized civil preparedness
33 auxiliary fire company shall keep on file, on forms provided by the
34 commissioner, the names and addresses of members who have been
35 authorized to use a flashing blue light or lights as provided in this
36 subsection. Such listing shall also designate the registration number of
37 the motor vehicle on which authorized a flashing blue light or lights are
38 to be used.

39 (d) A [green light or lights, including a] flashing [green] blue light or
40 lights [,] may be used on a motor vehicle operated by an active member
41 of a volunteer ambulance association or company who has been issued
42 a permit by the chief executive officer of such association or company to
43 use such a light or lights, while on the way to or at the scene of an
44 emergency requiring such member's services. Such permit shall be on a
45 form provided by the commissioner and may be revoked by such chief
46 executive officer or successor. The chief executive officer of each
47 volunteer ambulance association or company shall keep on file, on
48 forms provided by the commissioner, the names and addresses of

49 members who have been authorized to use a flashing [green] blue light
50 or lights as provided in this subsection. Such listing shall also designate
51 the registration number of the motor vehicle on which the authorized
52 flashing [green] blue lights are to be used.

53 (e) The commissioner may issue a permit for a flashing red light or
54 lights which may be used on a motor vehicle or equipment (1) used by
55 paid fire chiefs and their deputies and assistants, up to a total of five
56 individuals per department, (2) used by volunteer fire chiefs and their
57 deputies and assistants, up to a total of five individuals per department,
58 (3) used by members of the fire police on a stationary vehicle as a
59 warning signal during traffic directing operations at the scene of a fire
60 or emergency, (4) used by chief executive officers of emergency medical
61 service organizations, as defined in section 19a-175, the first or second
62 deputies, or if there are no deputies, the first or second assistants, of such
63 an organization that is a municipal or volunteer or licensed
64 organization, (5) used by local fire marshals, [or] (6) used by directors of
65 emergency management, or (7) used by a constable, elected pursuant to
66 section 9-200, on a stationary vehicle as a warning signal during traffic
67 directing operations.

68 (f) The commissioner may issue a permit for a yellow or amber light
69 or lights, including a flashing yellow or amber light or lights, which may
70 be used on motor vehicles or equipment that are (1) specified in
71 subsection (e) of this section, (2) maintenance vehicles, or (3) vehicles
72 transporting or escorting any vehicle or load or combinations thereof,
73 which is or are either oversize or overweight, or both, and being
74 operated or traveling under a permit issued by the Commissioner of
75 Transportation pursuant to section 14-270. A yellow or amber light or
76 lights, including a flashing yellow or amber light or lights, may be used
77 without obtaining a permit from the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles
78 on wreckers registered pursuant to section 14-66, on vehicles of carriers
79 in rural mail delivery service or on vehicles operated by construction
80 inspectors employed by the state of Connecticut, authorized by the
81 Commissioner of Transportation, used during the performance of
82 inspections on behalf of the state. The Commissioner of Transportation

83 shall maintain a list of such authorized construction inspectors,
84 including the name and address of each inspector and the registration
85 number for each vehicle on which the light or lights are to be used.

86 (g) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may issue a permit for a
87 white light or lights, including a flashing white light or lights, which
88 may be used on a motor vehicle or equipment as specified in subdivision
89 (1), (2), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (e) of this section. A vehicle being
90 operated by a member of a volunteer fire department or company or a
91 volunteer emergency medical technician may use flashing white head
92 lamps, provided such member or emergency medical technician is on
93 the way to the scene of a fire or medical emergency and has received
94 written authorization from the chief law enforcement officer of the
95 municipality to use such head lamps. Such head lamps shall only be
96 used within the municipality granting such authorization or from a
97 personal residence or place of employment, if located in an adjoining
98 municipality. Such authorization may be revoked for use of such head
99 lamps in violation of this subdivision. For the purposes of this
100 subsection, the term "flashing white lights" shall not include the
101 simultaneous flashing of head lamps.

102 (h) The commissioner may issue a permit for emergency vehicles, as
103 defined in subsection (a) of section 14-283, to use a blue, red, yellow, or
104 white light or lights, including a flashing light or lights or any
105 combination thereof, except as provided in subsection (k) of this section.

106 (i) The commissioner may issue a permit for ambulances, as defined
107 in section 19a-175, which may, in addition to the flashing light or lights
108 allowed in subsection (h) of this section, use flashing lights of other
109 colors specified by federal requirements for the manufacture of an
110 ambulance. If the commissioner issues a permit for any ambulance, such
111 permit shall be issued at the time of registration and upon each renewal
112 of such registration.

113 (j) A green, yellow or amber light or lights, including a flashing green,
114 yellow or amber light or lights or any combination thereof, may be used

115 on a maintenance vehicle owned and operated by the Department of
116 Transportation.

117 (k) No person, other than a police officer or inspector of the
118 Department of Motor Vehicles operating a state or local police vehicle,
119 shall operate a motor vehicle displaying a steady blue or steady red
120 illuminated light or both steady blue and steady red illuminated lights
121 that are visible externally from the front of the vehicle.

122 (l) Use of colored and flashing lights except as authorized by this
123 section shall be an infraction.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|

| | | |
|-----------|-----------------|--------|
| Section 1 | October 1, 2023 | 14-96q |
|-----------|-----------------|--------|

Statement of Purpose:

To allow volunteer ambulance associations and company members to use blue, rather than green, lights on their vehicles and permit elected constables to use red lights on their vehicles while involved in traffic direction operations.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]