



CHAPTER 20
ARTICLE 3 - MOTOR VEHICLE ACT OF 1937

N.C.G.S. § 20-131.

Requirements as to headlamps and
auxiliary driving lamps.

SOURCE	LAST AMENDMENT IN THIS TEXT	RETRIEVED	SOURCE FINGERPRINT
General Statutes of North Carolina, as published by the General Assembly	S.L. 2024-30, s. 9 — fifth act in the lineage	21 September 2026, 04:08 UTC	580ae48d0c3c4483be82dc3e - a0229ef41f974977ae1f5217 - de9e298bae014a08

- § 20-131(a)

The headlamps of motor vehicles shall be so constructed, arranged, and adjusted that, except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, they will at all times mentioned in G.S. 20-129, and under normal atmospheric conditions and on a level road, produce a driving light sufficient to render clearly discernible a person 200 feet ahead, but any person operating a motor vehicle upon the highways, when meeting another vehicle, shall so control the lights of the vehicle operated by him by shifting, depressing, def - lecting, tilting, or dimming the headlight beams in such manner as shall not project a glaring or dazzling light to persons within a distance of 500 feet in front of such headlamp. Every new motor vehicle, other than a motorcycle or motor-driven cycle, registered in this State after January 1, 1956, which has multiple-beam road-lighting equipment shall be equipped with a beam indicator, which shall be lighted whenever the uppermost distribution of light from the headlamps is in use, and shall not otherwise be lighted. Said indicator shall be so designed and located that when lighted it will be readily visible without glare to the driver of the vehicle so equipped. For purposes of this section, the term "motorcycle" shall not include autocycles. Autocycles shall be subject to the requirements under this section for motor vehicles.
- § 20-131(b)

Headlamps shall be deemed to comply with the foregoing provisions prohibiting glaring and dazzling lights if none of the main bright portion of the headlamp beams rises above a horizontal plane passing through the lamp centers parallel to the level road upon which the loaded vehicle stands, and in no case higher than 42 inches, 75 feet ahead of the vehicle.

- § 20-131(c)

Whenever a motor vehicle is being operated upon a highway, or portion thereof, which is sufficiently lighted to reveal a person on the highway at a distance of 200 feet ahead of the vehicle, it shall be permissible to dim the headlamps or to tilt the beams downward or to substitute therefor the light from an auxiliary driving lamp or pair of such lamps, subject to the restrictions as to tilted beams and auxiliary driving lamps set forth in this section.
- § 20-131(d)

Whenever a motor vehicle meets another vehicle on any highway it shall be permissible to tilt the beams of the headlamps downward or to substitute therefor the light from an auxiliary driving lamp or pair of such lamps subject to the requirement that the tilted headlamps or auxiliary lamp or lamps shall give sufficient illumination under normal atmospheric conditions and on a level road to render clearly discernible a person 75 feet ahead, but shall not project a glaring or dazzling light to persons in front of the vehicle: Provided, that at all times required in G.S. 20-129 at least two lights shall be displayed on the front of and on opposite sides of every motor vehicle other than a motorcycle, road roller, road machinery, or farm tractor.
- § 20-131(d1)

Any headlamp modified or installed on a vehicle after initial manufacture of the vehicle shall comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 108.
- § 20-131(e)

No city or town shall enact an ordinance in conflict with this section.

END OF SECTION TEXT

APPARATUS FOLLOWS — DERIVED, NOT ENACTED

APPARATUS I
5 ACTS

Amendment lineage

The State prints this history as a single parenthetical at the foot of the section. It is reproduced verbatim in the colophon and unpacked below in order of enactment.

1937

1981

2024

TICK HEIGHT = ACTS IN THAT YEAR DASHED = RECODIFICATION, NOT AMENDMENT

Nº	YEAR	ACT	CHARACTER
01	1937	c. 407, s. 94	ENACTED
02	1939	c. 351, s. 1	AMENDED
03	1955	c. 1157, ss. 6, 7	AMENDED
04	2015	S.L. 2015-163, s. 8	AMENDED

APPARATUS II
1 AUTHORITY

Authorities referenced

Every G.S. cross-reference appearing in the text of this section, in order of first appearance. Nothing is characterized; the operative language is quoted from the section itself.

REFERENCE	APPEARS IN	OPERATIVE LANGUAGE IN THIS SECTION
G.S. 20-129	(a)	"will at all times mentioned in"

APPARATUS III

Citation

FULL SECTION
N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-131 (2024).

PINPOINT
N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-131(a) (2024).

Pinpoint keys are set in the left margin of the text rather than line numbers: subsection designators are stable across editions and paper sizes, line numbers are not.

COLOPHON

Provenance

This document reproduces the text of one section of the General Statutes of North Carolina from a source file whose SHA-256 digest is printed on every page. The digest fixes the bytes this export was made from; if the State's file changes, the digest will not match.

The text of the section is unaltered. Subsection designators have been moved from the run of text into the margin. The amendment history and the table of authorities are derived from the section by mechanical extraction — they add no characterization of the law.

This is not the official text. The official text is published by the General Assembly of North Carolina.

HISTORY PARENTHETICAL, AS PRINTED BY THE STATE
(1937, c. 407, s. 94; 1939, c. 351, s. 1; 1955, c. 1157, ss. 6, 7; 2015-163, s. 8; 2024-30, s. 9.)

SET IN SPECTRAL AND ARCHIVO
NORTH CAROLINA LAW — STATUTE EXPORT, FORMAT V1

