



CHAPTER 20
ARTICLE 3 - MOTOR VEHICLE ACT OF 1937

N.C.G.S. § 20-146.

Drive on right side of highway; exceptions.

SOURCE General Statutes of North Carolina, as published by the General Assembly	LAST AMENDMENT IN THIS TEXT S.L. 2025-47, s. 17(a) — ninth act in the lineage	RETRIEVED 21 September 2026, 01:25 UTC	SOURCE FINGERPRINT 58278b34bed2f6a8594727f1 - 86066d9b0d05cf86fea7a66f - 3066dad0d5630175
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§ 20-146(a) Upon all highways of sufficient width a vehicle shall be driven upon the right half of the highway except as follows:

- (1) When overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction under the rules governing such movement;
- (2) When an obstruction exists making it necessary to drive to the left of the center of the highway; provided, any person so doing shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles traveling in the proper direction upon the unobstructed portion of the highway within such distance as to constitute an immediate hazard;
- (3) Upon a highway divided into three marked lanes for traffic under the rules applicable thereon; or
- (4) Upon a highway designated and signposted for one-way traffic.

§ 20-146(a1) Self-propelled grain combines or other self-propelled farm equipment shall be operated to the right of the centerline except as provided in G.S. 20-116(j)(4).

§ 20-146(b) Upon all highways any vehicle proceeding at less than the legal maximum speed limit shall be driven in the right-hand lane then available for thru traffic, or as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the highway, except when overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction or when preparing for a left turn.

§ 20-146(c) Upon any highway having four or more lanes for moving traffic and providing for two-way movement of traffic, no vehicle shall be driven to the left of the centerline

of the highway, except when authorized by official traffic-control devices designating certain lanes to the left side of the center of the highway for use by traffic not otherwise permitted to use such lanes or except as permitted under subsection (a)(2) hereof.

§ 20-146(d)

Whenever any street has been divided into two or more clearly marked lanes for traffic, the following rules in addition to all others consistent herewith shall apply.

- (1) A vehicle shall be driven as nearly as practicable entirely within a single lane and shall not be moved from such lane until the driver has first ascertained that such movement can be made with safety.
- (2) Upon a street which is divided into three or more lanes and provides for the two-way movement of traffic, a vehicle shall not be driven in the center lane except when overtaking and passing another vehicle traveling in the same direction when such center lane is clear of traffic within a safe distance, or in the preparation for making a left turn or where such center lane is at the time allocated exclusively to traffic moving in the same direction that the vehicle is proceeding and such allocation is designated by official traffic-control device.
- (3) Official traffic-control devices may be erected directing specified traffic to use a designated lane or designating those lanes to be used by traffic moving in a particular direction regardless of the center of the street and drivers of vehicles shall obey the direction of every such device.
- (4) Official traffic-control devices may be installed prohibiting the changing of lanes on sections of streets, and drivers of vehicles shall obey the directions of every such device.

§ 20-146(e)

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, when appropriate signs have been posted, it shall be unlawful for any person to operate a motor vehicle over and upon the inside lane, next to the median of any dual-lane highway at a speed less than the posted speed limit when the operation of said motor vehicle over and upon said inside lane shall impede the steady flow of traffic except when preparing for a left turn. "Appropriate signs" as used herein shall be construed as including "Slower Traffic Keep Right" or designations of similar import.

§ 20-146(f)

Except when entering or exiting the highway or avoiding a hazard or to pass, a motor vehicle having a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more shall not operate in the left most lane of a controlled-access highway with six or more lanes.

END OF SECTION TEXT

APPARATUS FOLLOWS — DERIVED, NOT ENACTED

APPARATUS I
9 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						2025
	TICK HEIGHT = ACTS IN THAT YEAR				DASHED = RECODIFICATION, NOT AMENDMENT						
Nº	YEAR	ACT				CHARACTER					
01	1937	c. 407, s. 108				ENACTED					
02	1965	c. 678, s. 2				AMENDED					
03	1973	c. 1330, s. 3				AMENDED					
04	1975	c. 593				AMENDED					
05	1985	c. 764, s. 25				AMENDED					
06	1985	1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 852, s. 17				AMENDED					
07	2001	S.L. 2001-487, s. 11				AMENDED					
08	2015	S.L. 2015-263, s. 6(b)				AMENDED					
09	2025	S.L. 2025-47, s. 17(a)				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. 20-116(j)(4)	(a1)	"the centerline except as provided in"

APPARATUS III

Citation

FULL SECTION

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-146 (2025).

PINPOINT

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-146(a) (2025).

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

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HISTORY PARENTHETICAL, AS PRINTED BY THE STATE

(1937, c. 407, s. 108; 1965, c. 678, s. 2; 1973, c. 1330, s. 3; 1975, c. 593; 1985, c. 764, s. 25; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 852, s. 17; 2001-487, s. 11; 2015-263, s. 6(b); 2025-47, s. 17(a).)

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