



CHAPTER 20
ARTICLE 3 - MOTOR VEHICLE ACT OF 1937

N.C.G.S. § 20-157.

Approach of law enforcement, fire department or rescue squad vehicles or ambulances; driving over fire hose or blocking fire fighting equipment; parking, etc., near law enforcement, fire department, or rescue squad vehicle or ambulance.

SOURCE	LAST AMENDMENT IN THIS TEXT	RETRIEVED	SOURCE FINGERPRINT
General Statutes of North Carolina, as published by the General Assembly	S.L. 2022-68, s. 6(a) — eighteenth act in the lineage	21 September 2026, 03:34 UTC	f14c9be923b80541cb676ba1 - 4ef78e9003286853cadf1250 - d6817c0ed8fdf7fd

§ 20-157(a) Upon the approach of any law enforcement or fire department vehicle or public or private ambulance or rescue squad emergency service vehicle, or a vehicle operated by the Division of Marine Fisheries of the Department of Environmental Quality, or the Division of Parks and Recreation of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, or the North Carolina Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services when traveling in response to a fire alarm or other emergency response purpose, giving warning signal by appropriate light and by audible bell, siren or exhaust whistle, audible under normal conditions from a distance not less than 1000 feet, the driver of every other vehicle shall immediately drive the same to a position as near as possible and parallel to the right-hand edge or curb, clear of any intersection of streets or highways, and shall stop and remain in such position unless otherwise directed by a law enforcement or traffic officer until the law enforcement or fire department vehicle, or the vehicle operated by the Division of Marine Fisheries of the Department of Environmental Quality, or the Division of Parks and Recreation

of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, or the North Carolina Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, or the public or private ambulance or rescue squad emergency service vehicle shall have passed. Provided, however, this subsection shall not apply to vehicles traveling in the opposite direction of the vehicles herein enumerated when traveling on a four-lane limited access highway with a median divider dividing the highway for vehicles traveling in opposite directions, and provided further that the violation of this subsection shall be negligence per se. Violation of this subsection is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

- § 20-157(b)** It shall be unlawful for the driver of any vehicle other than one on official business to follow any fire apparatus traveling in response to a fire alarm closer than one block or to drive into or park such vehicle within one block where fire apparatus has stopped in answer to a fire alarm.
- § 20-157(c)** Outside of the corporate limits of any city or town it shall be unlawful for the driver of any vehicle other than one on official business to follow any fire apparatus traveling in response to a fire alarm closer than 400 feet or to drive into or park such vehicle within a space of 400 feet from where fire apparatus has stopped in answer to a fire alarm.
- § 20-157(d)** It shall be unlawful to drive a motor vehicle over a fire hose or any other equipment that is being used at a fire at any time, or to block a fire-fighting apparatus or any other equipment from its source of supply regardless of its distance from the fire.
- § 20-157(e)** It shall be unlawful for the driver of a vehicle, other than one on official business, to park and leave standing such vehicle within 100 feet of law enforcement or fire department vehicles, public or private ambulances, or rescue squad emergency vehicles which are engaged in the investigation of an accident or engaged in rendering assistance to victims of such accident.
- § 20-157(f)** When an authorized emergency vehicle listed in subsection (a) of this section, or a public service vehicle, is parked or standing within 12 feet of a roadway and giving a warning signal by appropriate light, the driver of every other approaching vehicle shall, as soon as it is safe and when not otherwise directed by an individual lawfully directing traffic, do one of the following:

- (1) Move the vehicle into a lane that is not the lane nearest to the parked or standing authorized emergency vehicle or public service vehicle and continue traveling in that lane until safely clear of the authorized emergency vehicle or public service vehicle. This subdivision applies only if the roadway has at least two lanes for traffic proceeding in the direction of the approaching vehicle and if the approaching vehicle may change lanes safely and without interfering with any vehicular traffic.
- (2) Slow the vehicle, maintaining a safe speed for traffic conditions, and operate the vehicle at a reduced speed and be prepared to stop until completely past the authorized emergency vehicle or public service vehicle. This subdivision applies only if the roadway has only one lane for traffic proceeding in the direction of the approaching vehicle or if the approaching vehicle may not change lanes safely and without interfering with any vehicular traffic.

For purposes of this section, "public service vehicle" means a vehicle that is (i) being used to assist motorists or law enforcement officers with wrecked or disabled vehicles, (ii) being used to install, maintain, or restore utility service, including electric, cable, telephone, water, wastewater, communications, and gas, (iii) being used in the collection of refuse, solid waste, or recycling, or (iv) a highway maintenance vehicle owned and operated or contracted by the State or a local government and is operating an amber-colored flashing light authorized by G.S. 20-130.2. Violation of this subsection shall be negligence per se.

§ 20-157(g)

INFRACTION

Except as provided in subsections (a), (h), and (i) of this section, violation of this section shall be an infraction punishable by a fine of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00).

§ 20-157(h)

A person who violates this section and causes damage to property in the immediate area of the authorized emergency vehicle or public service vehicle in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500.00), or causes injury to a law enforcement officer, a firefighter, an emergency vehicle operator, an Incident Management Assistance Patrol member, a public service vehicle operator, or any other emergency response person in the immediate area of the authorized emergency vehicle or public service vehicle is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

§ 20-157(i)

CLASS F FELONY

A person who violates this section and causes serious injury or death to a law enforcement officer, a firefighter, an emergency vehicle operator, an Incident Management Assistance Patrol member, a public service vehicle operator, or any other emergency response person in the immediate area of the authorized emergency

vehicle or public service vehicle is guilty of a Class F felony. The Division may suspend, for up to six months, the drivers license of any person convicted under this subsection. If the Division suspends a person's license under this subsection, a judge may allow the licensee a limited driving privilege for a period not to exceed the period of suspension, provided the person's license has not also been revoked or suspended under any other provision of law. The limited driving privilege shall be issued in the same manner and under the terms and conditions prescribed in G.S. 20-16.1(b).

END OF SECTION TEXT

APPARATUS FOLLOWS — DERIVED, NOT ENACTED

APPARATUS I
18 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

1980

2022

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

Nº	YEAR	ACT	CHARACTER
01	1937	c. 407, s. 119	ENACTED
02	1955	cc. 173, 744	AMENDED
03	1971	c. 366, ss. 1, 2	AMENDED
04	1985	c. 764, s. 31	AMENDED
05	1985	1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 852, s. 17	AMENDED
06	1993	c. 539, s. 372	AMENDED
07	1994	Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c)	AMENDED
08	2001	S.L. 2001-331, s. 1	AMENDED
09	2005	S.L. 2005-189, s. 1	AMENDED
10	2006	S.L. 2006-259, s. 9	AMENDED
11	2007	S.L. 2007-360, s. 1	AMENDED
12	2010	S.L. 2010-132, s. 12	AMENDED
13	2012	S.L. 2012-14, s. 1	AMENDED
14	2013	S.L. 2013-415, s. 1(e)	AMENDED
15	2015	S.L. 2015-26, s. 3	AMENDED

16	2015	S.L. 2015-241, s. 14.30(ii)	AMENDED
17	2019	S.L. 2019-157, s. 2	AMENDED
18	2022	S.L. 2022-68, s. 6(a)	AMENDED

APPARATUS II
2 AUTHORITIES

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. 20-130.2	(f)	<i>"an amber-colored flashing light authorized by"</i>
G.S. 20-16.1(b)	(i)	<i>"the terms and conditions prescribed in"</i>

APPARATUS III

Citation

FULL SECTION
N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-157 (2022).

PINPOINT
N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-157(a) (2022).

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. 119; 1955, cc. 173, 744; 1971, c. 366, ss. 1, 2; 1985, c. 764, s. 31; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 852, s. 17; 1993, c. 539, s. 372; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2001-331, s. 1; 2005-189, s. 1; 2006-259, s. 9; 2007-360, s. 1; 2010-132, s. 12; 2012-14, s. 1; 2013-415, s. 1(e); 2015-26, s. 3; 2015-241, s. 14.30(ii); 2019-157, s. 2; 2022-68, s. 6(a).)

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