



CHAPTER 20

ARTICLE 18 - REGULATION OF FULLY AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

N.C.G.S. § 20-401.

Regulation of fully autonomous vehicles.

SOURCE	LAST AMENDMENT IN THIS TEXT	RETRIEVED	SOURCE FINGERPRINT
General Statutes of North Carolina, as published by the General Assembly	No amendment history on record	21 September 2026, 02:52 UTC	f3154929bf4607817dfaf419 - 590b5241faa4c7fe1a489f3d - a1599d98b1abfbdf

- § 20-401(a)** Driver's License Not Required. - Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 20-7 and this Chapter, the operator of a fully autonomous vehicle with the automated driving system engaged is not required to be licensed to operate a motor vehicle.
- § 20-401(b)** Vehicle Registration Card in Vehicle. - For a fully autonomous vehicle, the provisions of G.S. 20-49(4) and G.S. 20-57(c) are satisfied if the vehicle registration card is in the vehicle, physically or electronically, and readily available to be inspected by an officer or inspector.
- § 20-401(c)** Parent or Legal Guardian Responsible for Certain Violations. - The parent or legal guardian of a minor is responsible for a violation of G.S. 20-135.2B, the prohibition on children in an open bed of a pickup, or G.S. 20-137.1, the child restraint law, if the violation occurs in a fully autonomous vehicle.
- § 20-401(d)** Minimum Age for Unsupervised Minors in Fully Autonomous Vehicles. - It is unlawful for any parent or legal guardian of a person less than 12 years of age to knowingly permit that person to occupy a fully autonomous vehicle in motion or which has the engine running unless the person is under the supervision of a person 18 years of age or older.
- § 20-401(e)** Registered Owner Responsible for Moving Violations. - The person in whose name the fully autonomous vehicle is registered is responsible for a violation of this Chapter that is considered a moving violation, if the violation involves a fully autonomous vehicle.

§ 20-401(f) Unattended Vehicle. - A vehicle shall not be considered unattended pursuant to G.S. 20-163 or any other provision of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes merely because it is a fully autonomous vehicle with the automated driving system engaged.

§ 20-401(g) Duty to Stop in the Event of a Crash. - If all of the following conditions are met when a fully autonomous vehicle is involved in a crash, then the provisions of subsections (a) through (c2) and subsection (e) of G.S. 20-166 and subsections (a) and (c) of G.S. 20-166.1 shall be considered satisfied, and no violation of those provisions shall be charged:

- (1) The vehicle or the operator of the vehicle promptly contacts the appropriate law enforcement agency to report the crash.
- (2) The vehicle or operator of the vehicle promptly calls for medical assistance, if appropriate.
- (3) For a reportable crash, the vehicle remains at the scene of the crash until vehicle registration and insurance information is provided to the parties affected by the crash and a law enforcement officer authorizes the vehicle to be removed.
- (4) For a nonreportable crash, the vehicle remains at the scene or in the immediate vicinity of the crash until vehicle registration and insurance information is provided to the parties affected by the crash.

§ 20-401(h) Operation. - A person may operate a fully autonomous vehicle if the vehicle meets all of the following requirements:

- (1) Unless an exception or exemption has been granted under applicable State or federal law, the vehicle:
 - a. Is capable of being operated in compliance with Articles 3, 3A, 7, 11, and 13 of this Chapter;
 - b. Complies with applicable federal law and regulations; and
 - c. Has been certified in accordance with federal regulations in 49 C.F.R. Part 567 as being in compliance with applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards and bears the required certification label or labels.
- (2) The vehicle has the capability to meet the requirements of subsection (g) of this section.
- (3) The vehicle can achieve a minimal risk condition.

- (4) The vehicle is covered by a motor vehicle liability policy meeting the applicable requirements of G.S. 20-279.21.
- (5) The vehicle is registered in accordance with Part 3 of Article 3 of this Chapter, and, if registered in this State, the vehicle shall be identified on the registration and registration card as a fully autonomous vehicle.

§ 20-401(i) Preemption. - No local government shall enact any local law or ordinance related to the regulation or operation of fully autonomous vehicles or vehicles equipped with an automated driving system, other than regulation specifically authorized in Chapter 153A and Chapter 160A of the General Statutes that is not specifically related to those types of motor vehicles. (2017-166, s. 1.)

END OF SECTION TEXT

APPARATUS FOLLOWS — DERIVED, NOT ENACTED

APPARATUS II
9 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. 20-7	(a)	"Required. - Notwithstanding the provisions of"
G.S. 20-49(4)	(b)	"fully autonomous vehicle, the provisions of"
G.S. 20-57(c)	(b)	"the provisions of G.S. 20-49(4) and"
G.S. 20-135.2B	(c)	"is responsible for a violation of"
G.S. 20-137.1	(c)	"open bed of a pickup, or"
G.S. 20-163	(f)	"not be considered unattended pursuant to"
G.S. 20-166	(g)	"through (c2) and subsection (e) of"
G.S. 20-166.1	(g)	"and subsections (a) and (c) of"
G.S. 20-279.21	(h)(4)	"policy meeting the applicable requirements of"

APPARATUS III

Citation

FULL SECTION

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-401 (2026).

PINPOINT

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-401(a) (2026).

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

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