

§ 20-154. Signals on starting, stopping or turning.

(a) The driver of any vehicle upon a highway or public vehicular area before starting, stopping or turning from a direct line shall first see that such movement can be made in safety, and if any pedestrian may be affected by such movement shall give a clearly audible signal by sounding the horn, and whenever the operation of any other vehicle may be affected by such movement, shall give a signal as required in this section, plainly visible to the driver of such other vehicle, of the intention to make such movement. The driver of a vehicle shall not back the same unless such movement can be made with safety and without interfering with other traffic.

(a1) A person who violates subsection (a) of this section and causes a motorcycle or bicycle operator to change travel lanes or leave that portion of any public street or highway designated as travel lanes shall be responsible for an infraction and shall be assessed a fine of not less than two hundred dollars (\$200.00). A person who violates subsection (a) of this section that results in a crash causing property damage or personal injury to a motorcycle or bicycle operator or passenger shall be responsible for an infraction and shall be assessed a fine of not less than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) unless subsection (a2) of this section applies.

(a2) A person who violates subsection (a) of this section and the violation results in a crash causing property damage in excess of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or a serious bodily injury as defined in G.S. 20-160.1(b) to a motorcycle or bicycle operator or passenger shall be responsible for an infraction and shall be assessed a fine of not less than seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00). A violation of this subsection shall be treated as a failure to yield right-of-way to a motorcycle or bicycle, as applicable, for purposes of assessment of points under G.S. 20-16(c). In addition, the trial judge shall have the authority to order the license of any driver violating this subsection suspended for a period not to exceed 30 days. If a judge orders suspension of a person's drivers license pursuant to this subsection, the judge may allow the licensee a limited driving privilege for a period not to exceed the period of suspension. 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)(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), and G.S. 20-16.1(g).

(b) The signal herein required shall be given by means of the hand and arm in the manner herein specified, or by any mechanical or electrical signal device approved by the Division, except that when a vehicle is so constructed or loaded as to prevent the hand and arm signal from being visible, both to the front and rear, the signal shall be given by a device of a type which has been approved by the Division.

Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b1) of this section, whenever the signal is given the driver shall indicate his intention to start, stop, or turn by extending the hand and arm from and beyond the left side of the vehicle as hereinafter set forth.

Left turn – hand and arm horizontal, forefinger pointing.

Right turn – upper arm horizontal, forearm and hand pointed upward.

Stop – upper arm horizontal, forearm and hand pointed downward.

All hand and arm signals shall be given from the left side of the vehicle and all signals shall be maintained or given continuously for the last 100 feet traveled prior to stopping or making a turn. Provided, that in all areas where the speed limit is 45 miles per hour or higher and the operator intends to turn from a direct line of travel, a signal of intention to turn from a direct line of travel shall be given continuously during the last 200 feet traveled before turning.

Any motor vehicle in use on a highway shall be equipped with, and required signal shall be given by, a signal lamp or lamps or mechanical signal device when the distance from the center of the top of the steering post to the left outside limit of the body, cab or load of such motor vehicle exceeds 24 inches, or when the distance from the center of the top of the steering post to the rear limit of the body or load thereof exceeds 14 feet. The latter measurement shall apply

to any single vehicle, also to any combination of vehicles except combinations operated by farmers in hauling farm products.

(b1) Notwithstanding the requirement set forth in subsection (b) of this section that a driver signal a right turn by extending his or her hand and arm from beyond the left side of the vehicle, an operator of a bicycle may signal his or her intention to make a right turn by extending his or her hand and arm horizontally, with the forefinger pointing, from beyond the right side of the bicycle.

(c) No person shall operate over the highways of this State a right-hand-drive motor vehicle or a motor vehicle equipped with the steering mechanism on the right-hand side thereof unless said motor vehicle is equipped with mechanical or electrical signal devices by which the signals for left turns and right turns may be given. Such mechanical or electrical devices shall be approved by the Division.

(d) A violation of this section shall not constitute negligence per se. (1937, c. 407, s. 116; 1949, c. 1016, s. 1; 1951, cc. 293, 360; 1955, c. 1157, s. 9; 1957, c. 488, s. 2; 1965, c. 768; 1973, c. 1330, s. 19; 1975, c. 716, s. 5; 1981, c. 599, s. 4; 1985, c. 96; 2011-361, s. 1; 2013-366, s. 5(a); 2016-90, s. 5.5(c).)