

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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SENATE BILL 449

Short Title: Video of DWI Stops and Chemical Tests. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Goolsby (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate.

March 27, 2013

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REQUIRE ALL BREATH-TESTING SITES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLES ENGAGED IN TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT TO BE EQUIPPED WITH A VIDEO RECORDING DEVICE AND TO REQUIRE THE RECORDING OF ALL IMPAIRED DRIVING OFFENSES AT THE INCIDENT SITE AND THE BREATH-TESTING SITE UNLESS SUCH RECORDING IS IMPOSSIBLE, AND TO REQUIRE A FEE BE ASSESSED TO A PERSON CONVICTED OF DRIVING WHILE IMPAIRED TO OFFSET THE COST OF OPERATING THE VIDEO RECORDING SYSTEMS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Article 3 of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 20-138.1A. Incident site and breath-testing site video recording.

(a) Requirement. – A person who is charged with an impaired driving offense must have his or her conduct at the incident site and the breath-testing site video recorded.

(b) Incident Site Recording. – The video recording at the incident site shall meet the following criteria:

(1) Not begin later than the activation of the officer's blue lights.

(2) Include any field sobriety tests administered.

(3) Include the arrest of a person for an impaired driving offense and show the person being advised of his Miranda rights.

(c) Test Site Recording. – The video recording at the breath-testing site shall meet the following criteria:

(1) Include the entire breath-test procedure, including the suspect being informed that he or she is being video recorded.

(2) Include the person taking or refusing the breath test and the actions of the breath-test operator while conducting the test.

(3) Include the person's conduct during the required 15-minute pretest waiting period, unless the officer submits a sworn affidavit certifying that it was impossible to video record this waiting period.

(d) Admissibility of Recordings. – The video recordings of the incident site and of the breath-testing site are admissible pursuant to the North Carolina Rules of Evidence in a criminal, administrative, or civil proceeding by any party to the action.

(e) Additional Evidence. – Nothing in this section may be construed as prohibiting the introduction of other relevant evidence at trial for an impaired driving offense. Failure by the arresting or charging officer to produce the video recording required by this section does not



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1 constitute grounds for dismissal of an impaired driving offense if the arresting officer submits a
2 sworn affidavit certifying that the video recording equipment at the incident site or video
3 equipment at the breath-testing facility was in an inoperable condition, and stating that
4 reasonable efforts have been made to maintain the equipment in an operable condition, and
5 certifying that there was no other operable breath-testing facility available in the county or, in
6 the alternative, submits a sworn affidavit certifying that it was physically impossible to produce
7 the video recording because the person needed emergency medical treatment or exigent
8 circumstances existed. In circumstances including, but not limited to, roadblocks and traffic
9 crash investigations where an arrest has been made and the video recording equipment has not
10 been activated by blue lights, the failure by the arresting or charging officer to produce the
11 video recordings required by this section does not constitute grounds for dismissal. However,
12 as soon as video recording is practicable in these circumstances, video recording must begin
13 and conform to the provisions of this section. Nothing in this section prohibits the court from
14 considering any other valid reason for the failure to produce the video recording based upon the
15 totality of the circumstances, nor do the provisions of this section prohibit the person from
16 offering evidence relating to the arresting law enforcement officer's or charging officer's failure
17 to produce the video recording.

18 (f) Recording Retention. – A video recording must not be disposed of in any manner
19 except for its transfer to a master recording for consolidation purposes until a final judgment is
20 rendered in any legal proceeding arising out of the stop or arrest.

21 (g) Purchase and Maintenance of Video Recording Systems. – The Department of
22 Transportation is responsible for purchasing, maintaining, and supplying all necessary video
23 recording equipment for use at the breath-testing sites. The Department of Public Safety is
24 responsible for monitoring all breath-testing sites to ensure the proper maintenance of video
25 recording equipment. The Department of Transportation is responsible for purchasing,
26 maintaining, and supplying all videotaping equipment for use in all law enforcement vehicles in
27 the State used for traffic enforcement. The Department of Public Safety is also responsible for
28 monitoring all law enforcement vehicles used for traffic enforcement to ensure proper
29 maintenance of video recording equipment.

30 (h) Rules for Video Recording System Maintenance. – The Department of Public Safety
31 shall promulgate rules necessary to implement the provisions of this section.

32 (i) Installation of Video Recording Systems; Effect. – The provisions contained in this
33 section take effect for each law enforcement vehicle used for traffic enforcement as soon as the
34 law enforcement vehicle is equipped with a video recording device. The provisions contained
35 in this section take effect for a breath-testing site once the breath-testing site is equipped with a
36 video recording device."

37 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 7A-304(a) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

38 "(11) For the video recording system services of the Department of Public Safety,
39 the district or superior court judge shall, upon conviction, order payment of
40 the sum of three hundred dollars (\$300.00) to be remitted to the Department
41 of Public Safety. This cost shall be assessed only in cases in which, as part
42 of the investigation leading to the defendant's conviction, the arresting
43 agency utilized a mobile video recording system or a fixed video recording
44 system to record the administration of field sobriety testing or chemical
45 analysis procedures. The court may waive or reduce the amount of the
46 payment required by this subdivision upon a finding of just cause to grant
47 such a waiver or reduction."

48 **SECTION 3.** Nothing in this act shall require the purchase and installation of the
49 required video recording systems in a law enforcement vehicle or at a breath-testing site unless
50 funds are appropriated by the General Assembly for such purpose.

1 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2013, and applies to
2 impaired driving offenses committed on or after that date. Prosecutions for offenses committed
3 before the effective date of this act are not abated or affected by this act, and the statutes that
4 would be applicable but for this act remain applicable to those prosecutions.