§ 20-131. Requirements as to headlamps and auxiliary driving lamps.

(a) The headlamps of motor vehicles shall be so constructed, arranged, and adjusted that, except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, they will at all times mentioned in G.S. 20-129, and under normal atmospheric conditions and on a level road, produce a driving light sufficient to render clearly discernible a person 200 feet ahead, but any person operating a motor vehicle upon the highways, when meeting another vehicle, shall so control the lights of the vehicle operated by him by shifting, depressing, deflecting, tilting, or dimming the headlight beams in such manner as shall not project a glaring or dazzling light to persons within a distance of 500 feet in front of such headlamp. Every new motor vehicle, other than a motorcycle or motor-driven cycle, registered in this State after January 1, 1956, which has multiple-beam road-lighting equipment shall be equipped with a beam indicator, which shall be lighted whenever the uppermost distribution of light from the headlamps is in use, and shall not otherwise be lighted. Said indicator shall be so designed and located that when lighted it will be readily visible without glare to the driver of the vehicle so equipped. For purposes of this section, the term "motorcycle" shall not include autocycles. Autocycles shall be subject to the requirements under this section for motor vehicles.

(b) Headlamps shall be deemed to comply with the foregoing provisions prohibiting glaring and dazzling lights if none of the main bright portion of the headlamp beams rises above a horizontal plane passing through the lamp centers parallel to the level road upon which the loaded vehicle stands, and in no case higher than 42 inches, 75 feet ahead of the vehicle.

(c) Whenever a motor vehicle is being operated upon a highway, or portion thereof, which is sufficiently lighted to reveal a person on the highway at a distance of 200 feet ahead of the vehicle, it shall be permissible to dim the headlamps or to tilt the beams downward or to substitute therefor the light from an auxiliary driving lamp or pair of such lamps, subject to the restrictions as to tilted beams and auxiliary driving lamps set forth in this section.

(d) Whenever a motor vehicle meets another vehicle on any highway it shall be permissible to tilt the beams of the headlamps downward or to substitute therefor the light from an auxiliary driving lamp or pair of such lamps subject to the requirement that the tilted headlamps or auxiliary lamp or lamps shall give sufficient illumination under normal atmospheric conditions and on a level road to render clearly discernible a person 75 feet ahead, but shall not project a glaring or dazzling light to persons in front of the vehicle: Provided, that at all times required in G.S. 20-129 at least two lights shall be displayed on the front of and on opposite sides of every motor vehicle other than a motorcycle, road roller, road machinery, or farm tractor.

(d1) Any headlamp modified or installed on a vehicle after initial manufacture of the vehicle shall comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 108.

(e) No city or town shall enact an ordinance in conflict with this section. (1937, c. 407, s. 94; 1939, c. 351, s. 1; 1955, c. 1157, ss. 6, 7; 2015-163, s. 8; 2024-30, s. 9.)