

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005

SESSION LAW 2005-460
HOUSE BILL 217

AN ACT TO MAKE IT UNLAWFUL TO DRIVE AWAY FROM OR OTHERWISE
LEAVE THE SCENE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT IN CERTAIN
CIRCUMSTANCES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 20-166 reads as rewritten:

"§ 20-166. Duty to stop in event of accident or collision; furnishing information or assistance to injured person, etc.; persons assisting exempt from civil liability.

- (a) The driver of any vehicle who knows or reasonably should know:
- (1) That the vehicle which he or she is operating is involved in an accident or collision; and
 - (2) That the accident or collision has resulted in injury or death to any person;

shall immediately stop his or her vehicle at the scene of the accident or collision. ~~He~~ The driver shall remain with the vehicle at the scene of the accident until a law-enforcement officer completes his-the investigation of the accident or collision or authorizes him-the driver to leave; leave and the vehicle to be removed, unless remaining at the scene places the driver or others at significant risk of injury.

Prior to the completion of the investigation of the accident by a law enforcement officer, or the consent of the officer to leave, the driver may not facilitate, allow, or agree to the removal of the vehicle from the scene for any purpose other than to call for a law enforcement officer, to call for medical assistance or medical treatment as set forth in subsection (b) of this section, or to remove oneself or others from significant risk of injury. Provided, however, that he may leave to call for a law enforcement officer or for medical assistance or medical treatment as set forth in (b), but If the driver does leave for a reason permitted by this subsection, then the driver must return with the vehicle to the accident scene within a reasonable period of time-time, unless otherwise instructed by a law enforcement officer. A willful violation of this subsection shall be punished as a Class H felony.

(b) In addition to complying with the requirement of ~~(a)~~, subsection (a) of this section, the driver as set forth in subsection (a) shall give his or her name, address, driver's license number and the license plate number of ~~his-the~~ vehicle to the person struck or the driver or occupants of any vehicle collided with, provided that ~~such-the~~ person or persons are physically and mentally capable of receiving such information, and shall render to any person injured in such accident or collision reasonable assistance, including the calling for medical assistance if it is apparent that such assistance is necessary or is requested by the injured person. A violation of this subsection is a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c) The driver of any vehicle, when he or she knows or reasonably should know that the vehicle which he or she is operating is involved in an accident or collision, which accident or collision, results:

- (1) Only in damage to property; or
- (2) In injury or death to any person, but only if the operator of the vehicle did not know and did not have reason to know of the death or injury;

shall immediately stop ~~his~~ the vehicle at the scene of the accident or collision. If the accident is a reportable accident, the driver shall remain with the vehicle at the scene of the accident until a law enforcement officer completes the investigation of the accident or authorizes the driver to leave and the vehicle to be removed, unless remaining at the scene places the driver or others at significant risk of injury.

Prior to the completion of the investigation of the accident by a law enforcement officer, or the consent of the officer to leave, the driver may not facilitate, allow, or agree to the removal of the vehicle from the scene, for any purpose other than to call for a law enforcement officer, to call for medical assistance or medical treatment, or to remove oneself or others from significant risk of injury. If the driver does leave for a reason permitted by this subsection, then the driver must return with the vehicle to the accident scene within a reasonable period of time, unless otherwise instructed by a law enforcement officer. A willful violation of this subsection is a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c1) In addition to complying with the requirement of ~~(e)~~, subsection (c) of this section, the driver as set forth in subsection (c) shall give his or her name, address, driver's license number and the license plate number of his vehicle to the driver or occupants of any other vehicle involved in the accident or collision or to any person whose property is damaged in the accident or collision. If the damaged property is a parked and unattended vehicle and the name and location of the owner is not known to or readily ascertainable by the driver of the responsible vehicle, the ~~said~~ driver shall furnish the information required by this subsection to the nearest available peace officer, or, in the alternative, and provided ~~he~~ the driver thereafter within 48 hours fully complies with G.S. 20-166.1(c), shall immediately place a paper-writing containing ~~said~~ the information in a conspicuous place upon or in the damaged vehicle. If the damaged property is a guardrail, utility pole, or other fixed object owned by the Department of Transportation, a public utility, or other public service corporation to which report cannot readily be made at the scene, it shall be sufficient if the responsible driver shall furnish the information required to the nearest peace officer or make written report thereof containing ~~said~~ the information by U.S. certified mail, return receipt requested, to the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles within five days following ~~said~~ the collision. A violation of this subsection is a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c2) ~~If~~ Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (c) of this section, if an accident or collision occurs on a main lane, ramp, shoulder, median, or adjacent area of a highway, each vehicle shall be moved as soon as possible out of the travel lane and onto the shoulder or to a designated accident investigation site to complete the requirements of this section and minimize interference with traffic if all of the following apply:

- (1) The accident or collision has not resulted in injury or death to any person or the drivers did not know or have reason to know of any injury or death.
- (2) Each vehicle can be normally and safely driven. For purposes of this subsection, a vehicle can be normally and safely driven if it does not require towing and can be operated under its own power and in its usual manner, without additional damage or hazard to the vehicle, other traffic, or the roadway.

(d) Any person who renders first aid or emergency assistance at the scene of a motor vehicle accident on any street or highway to any person injured as a result of ~~such~~ the accident, shall not be liable in civil damages for any acts or omissions relating to ~~such~~ the services rendered, unless ~~such~~ the acts or omissions amount to wanton conduct or intentional wrongdoing.

(e) The Division of Motor Vehicles shall revoke the drivers license of a person convicted of violating subsection (a) of this section for a period of one year, unless the court makes a finding that a longer period of revocation is appropriate under the circumstances of the case. If the court makes this finding, the Division of Motor Vehicles shall revoke that person's drivers license for two years. Upon a first conviction only for a violation of subsection (a) of this section, a trial judge may allow limited

driving privileges in the manner set forth in G.S. 20-179.3(b)(2) during any period of time during which the drivers license is revoked."

SECTION 2. Article 3 of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 20-166.2. Duty of passenger to remain at the scene of an accident.

(a) The passenger of any vehicle who knows or reasonably should know that the vehicle in which he or she is a passenger is involved in an accident or collision shall not willfully leave the scene of the accident by acting as the driver of a vehicle involved in the accident until a law enforcement officer completes the investigation of the accident or collision or authorizes the passenger to leave, unless remaining at the scene places the passenger or others at significant risk of injury.

Prior to the completion of the investigation of the accident by a law enforcement officer, or the consent of the officer to leave, the passenger may not facilitate, allow, or agree to the removal of the vehicle from the scene, for any purpose other than to call for a law enforcement officer, to call for medical assistance or medical treatment as set forth in subsection (b) of this section, or to remove oneself or others from a significant risk of injury. If the passenger does leave the scene of an accident by driving a vehicle involved in the accident for a reason permitted by this subsection, the passenger must return with the vehicle to the accident scene within a reasonable period of time, unless otherwise instructed by a law enforcement officer. A willful violation of this subsection is a Class H felony if the accident or collision is described in G.S. 20-166(a). A willful violation of this subsection is a Class 1 misdemeanor if the accident or collision is a reportable accident described in G.S. 20-166(c).

(b) In addition to complying with the requirement of subsection (a) of this section, the passenger shall give the passenger's name, address, drivers license number, and the license plate number of the vehicle in which the passenger was riding, if possible, to the person struck or the driver or occupants of any vehicle collided with, provided that the person or persons are physically and mentally capable of receiving the information, and shall render to any person injured in the accident or collision reasonable assistance, including the calling for medical assistance if it is apparent that such assistance is necessary or is requested by the injured person. A violation of this subsection is a Class 1 misdemeanor."

SECTION 3. This act becomes effective December 1, 2005, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 23rd day of August, 2005.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

s/ James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley
Governor

Approved 4:46 p.m. this 2nd day of October, 2005