



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 476**

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 7204

*House of Representatives, April 2, 2025*

The Committee on Public Safety and Security reported through REP. BOYD of the 50th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING LIGHTS ON VEHICLES, PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF CERTAIN STATUTES, STOPS AND SEARCHES, A PHLEBOTOMY PROGRAM STUDY, INSPECTIONS OF CERTAIN VEHICLES, TRAFFIC SAFETY CORRIDORS AND A PILOT PROGRAM TO EQUIP POLICE VEHICLES WITH CERTAIN DEVICES.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 14-96q of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

3 (a) A permit is required for the use of colored or flashing lights on all  
4 motor vehicles or equipment specified in this section except: (1) Motor  
5 vehicles not registered in this state used for transporting or escorting  
6 any vehicle or load, or combinations thereof, which is either oversize or  
7 overweight, or both, when operating under a permit issued by the  
8 Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to section 14-270; [or] (2)  
9 motor vehicles or equipment that are (A) equipped with lights in  
10 accordance with this section, (B) owned or leased by the federal  
11 government, the state of Connecticut, or any other state, commonwealth  
12 or local municipality, and (C) registered to such governmental entity; or

13 (3) wreckers registered pursuant to section 14-66 that are equipped with  
14 lights in accordance with subsection (k) of this section. When used in  
15 this section, the term "flashing" shall be considered to include the term  
16 "revolving".

17 (b) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, or such other person  
18 specifically identified in this section, may issue permits for the use of  
19 colored or flashing lights on vehicles in accordance with this section, at  
20 the commissioner's or such person's discretion. Any person, firm or  
21 corporation other than the state or any metropolitan district, town, city  
22 or borough shall pay an annual permit fee of twenty dollars to the  
23 commissioner for each such vehicle. Such fee shall apply only to permits  
24 issued by the commissioner.

25 (c) A [flashing] blue light or lights, including flashing blue lights, may  
26 be used on a motor vehicle operated by an active member of a volunteer  
27 fire department or company or an active member of an organized civil  
28 preparedness auxiliary fire company who has been issued a permit by  
29 the chief executive officer of such department or company to use such a  
30 [flashing] blue light or lights while on the way to or at the scene of a fire  
31 or other emergency requiring such member's services. Such permit shall  
32 be on a form provided by the commissioner and may be revoked by such  
33 chief executive officer or such chief executive officer's successor. The  
34 chief executive officer of each volunteer fire department or company or  
35 organized civil preparedness auxiliary fire company shall keep on file,  
36 on forms provided by the commissioner, the names and addresses of  
37 members who have been authorized to use a [flashing] blue light or  
38 lights as provided in this subsection. Such listing shall also designate the  
39 registration number of the motor vehicle on which an authorized [a  
40 flashing] blue light or lights are to be used.

41 (d) A flashing green or blue light or lights may be used on a motor  
42 vehicle operated by an active member of a volunteer ambulance  
43 association or company who has been issued a permit by the chief  
44 executive officer of such association or company to use such a light or  
45 lights, while on the way to or at the scene of an emergency requiring

46 such member's services. Such permit shall be on a form provided by the  
47 commissioner and may be revoked by such chief executive officer or  
48 such chief executive officer's successor. The chief executive officer of  
49 each volunteer ambulance association or company shall keep on file, on  
50 forms provided by the commissioner, the names and addresses of  
51 members who have been authorized to use a flashing green or blue light  
52 or lights as provided in this subsection. Such listing shall also designate  
53 the registration number of the motor vehicle on which the authorized  
54 flashing green or blue light or lights are to be used.

55 (e) The commissioner may issue a permit for a [flashing] red light or  
56 lights, including flashing red lights, which may be used on a motor  
57 vehicle or equipment (1) used by paid fire chiefs and their deputies and  
58 assistants, up to a total of five individuals per department, (2) used by  
59 volunteer fire chiefs and their deputies and assistants, up to a total of  
60 five individuals per department, (3) used by members of the fire police  
61 on a stationary vehicle as a warning signal during traffic directing  
62 operations at the scene of a fire or emergency, (4) used by chief executive  
63 officers of emergency medical service organizations, as defined in  
64 section 19a-175, the first or second deputies, or if there are no deputies,  
65 the first or second assistants, of such an organization that is a municipal  
66 or volunteer or licensed organization, (5) used by local fire marshals, (6)  
67 used by directors of emergency management, or (7) used by a constable,  
68 appointed pursuant to an ordinance authorized by section 9-185 or  
69 elected pursuant to section 9-200, on a stationary vehicle as a warning  
70 signal during traffic directing operations.

71 (f) The commissioner may issue a permit for a yellow or amber light  
72 or lights, including a flashing yellow or amber light or lights, which may  
73 be used on motor vehicles or equipment that are (1) specified in  
74 subsection (e) of this section, (2) maintenance vehicles, or (3) vehicles  
75 transporting or escorting any vehicle or load or combinations thereof,  
76 which is or are either oversize or overweight, or both, and being  
77 operated or traveling under a permit issued by the Commissioner of  
78 Transportation pursuant to section 14-270. A yellow or amber light or  
79 lights, including a flashing yellow or amber light or lights, may be used

80 without obtaining a permit from the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles  
81 [on wreckers registered pursuant to section 14-66,] on vehicles of  
82 carriers in rural mail delivery service or on vehicles operated by  
83 construction inspectors employed by the state of Connecticut,  
84 authorized by the Commissioner of Transportation, used during the  
85 performance of inspections on behalf of the state. The Commissioner of  
86 Transportation shall maintain a list of such authorized construction  
87 inspectors, including the name and address of each inspector and the  
88 registration number for each vehicle on which the light or lights are to  
89 be used.

90 (g) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may issue a permit for a  
91 white light or lights, including a flashing white light or lights, which  
92 may be used on a motor vehicle or equipment as specified in subdivision  
93 (1), (2), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (e) of this section. A vehicle being  
94 operated by a member of a volunteer fire department or company or a  
95 volunteer emergency medical technician may use flashing white head  
96 lamps, provided such member or emergency medical technician is on  
97 the way to the scene of a fire or medical emergency and has received  
98 written authorization from the chief law enforcement officer of the  
99 municipality to use such head lamps. Such head lamps shall only be  
100 used within the municipality granting such authorization or from a  
101 personal residence or place of employment, if located in an adjoining  
102 municipality. Such authorization may be revoked for use of such head  
103 lamps in violation of this subdivision. For the purposes of this  
104 subsection, the term "flashing white lights" shall not include the  
105 simultaneous flashing of head lamps.

106 (h) The commissioner may issue a permit for emergency vehicles, as  
107 defined in subsection (a) of section 14-283, to use a blue, red, yellow, or  
108 white light or lights, including a flashing light or lights or any  
109 combination thereof. [ , except as provided in subsection (k) of this  
110 section.]

111 (i) The commissioner may issue a permit for ambulances, as defined  
112 in section 19a-175, which may, in addition to the flashing light or lights

113 allowed in subsection (h) of this section, use flashing lights of other  
114 colors specified by federal requirements for the manufacture of an  
115 ambulance. If the commissioner issues a permit for any ambulance, such  
116 permit shall be issued at the time of registration and upon each renewal  
117 of such registration.

118 (j) A green, yellow or amber light or lights, including a flashing green,  
119 yellow or amber light or lights or any combination thereof, may be used  
120 on a maintenance vehicle owned and operated by the Department of  
121 Transportation.

122 (k) [No person, other than a police officer or inspector of the  
123 Department of Motor Vehicles operating a state or local police vehicle,  
124 shall operate a motor vehicle displaying a steady blue or steady red  
125 illuminated light or both steady blue and steady red illuminated lights  
126 that are visible externally from the front of the vehicle] A yellow or  
127 amber light or lights, including a flashing yellow or amber light or  
128 lights, or any combination thereof, or a steady blue light or lights may  
129 be used on a wrecker registered pursuant to section 14-66 while such  
130 wrecker is stationary.

131 (l) Use of colored and flashing lights except as authorized by this  
132 section shall be an infraction.

133 Sec. 2. Subsections (f) and (g) of section 14-99g of the general statutes  
134 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*  
135 *October 1, 2025*):

136 (f) Any person who violates any provision of subsections (b) to (e),  
137 inclusive, of this section shall be [deemed to have committed an  
138 infraction] subject to the penalties provided in subsection (b) of section  
139 14-222 for each offense. Any person who violates any provision of  
140 subsection (b) of this section shall remove such object or material which  
141 obstructs [his] such person's clear and full view of the road and report  
142 within sixty days to the police department which issued the [infractions  
143 complaint] summons to present [his] such person's vehicle for  
144 inspection and to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of this

145 section. If such person fails to report to such police department and is  
146 cited for a subsequent violation of this section, [his] such person's  
147 vehicle shall be impounded after notice and opportunity for hearing.

148 (g) Any person owning a vehicle having a window which has been  
149 tinted or darkened with any tinted material after factory delivery, shall  
150 present such vehicle to the Department of Motor Vehicles, by July 1,  
151 [1996] 2026, to receive a sticker for any tinted or darkened window to  
152 indicate such tinting or darkening is in compliance with this section.  
153 Any person operating a motor vehicle, on or after July 1, [1996] 2026, in  
154 violation of this subsection shall be [deemed to have committed an  
155 infraction] subject to the penalties provided in subsection (b) of section  
156 14-222.

157 Sec. 3. Section 14-222a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
158 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

159 Any person who, in consequence of the negligent operation of a  
160 motor vehicle, causes the death of another person shall be [fined not  
161 more than three thousand five hundred dollars or imprisoned not more  
162 than three years, or both] guilty of a class C felony for which three years  
163 of the sentence imposed may not be suspended or reduced by the court.

164 Sec. 4. Section 14-223 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
165 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

166 (a) Whenever the operator of any motor vehicle fails promptly to  
167 bring [his] such operator's motor vehicle to a full stop upon the signal  
168 of any officer in uniform or prominently displaying the officer's badge  
169 of [his] office, or disobeys the direction of such officer with relation to  
170 the operation of [his] such operator's motor vehicle, [he] such operator  
171 shall be [deemed to have committed an infraction and be fined fifty  
172 dollars] guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

173 (b) No person operating a motor vehicle, when signaled to stop by an  
174 officer in a police vehicle using an audible signal device or flashing or  
175 revolving lights, shall increase the speed of the motor vehicle in an

176 attempt to escape or elude such police officer. Any person who violates  
177 this subsection shall be guilty of a class [A misdemeanor] D felony,  
178 except that, if such violation causes the death or serious physical injury,  
179 as defined in section 53a-3, of another person, such person shall be guilty  
180 of a class C felony, and shall have such person's motor vehicle operator's  
181 license suspended for one year for the first offense, except that the  
182 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may, after a hearing, as provided for  
183 in subsection (i) of section 14-111, and upon a showing of compelling  
184 mitigating circumstances, reinstate such person's license before the  
185 expiration of such one-year period. For any subsequent offense such  
186 person shall be guilty of a class C felony, except that if any prior offense  
187 by such person under this subsection caused, and such subsequent  
188 offense causes, the death or serious physical injury, as defined in section  
189 53a-3, of another person, such person shall be guilty of a class C felony  
190 for which one year of the sentence imposed may not be suspended or  
191 reduced by the court, and shall have such person's motor vehicle  
192 operator's license suspended for not less than eighteen months nor more  
193 than two years, except that said commissioner may, after a hearing, as  
194 provided for in subsection (i) of section 14-111, and upon a showing of  
195 compelling mitigating circumstances, reinstate such person's license  
196 before such period.

197 Sec. 5. Subsections (f) and (g) of section 14-224 of the general statutes  
198 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*  
199 *October 1, 2025*):

200 (f) Any person who violates the provisions of subsection (a) or  
201 subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section shall be guilty of a class  
202 B felony for which five years of the sentence imposed may not be  
203 suspended or reduced by the court.

204 (g) (1) Any person who violates the provisions of subdivision (2) of  
205 subsection (b) of this section shall be guilty of a class D felony for which  
206 two years of the sentence imposed may not be suspended or reduced by  
207 the court.

208 (2) Any person who violates the provisions of subdivision (3) of

209 subsection (b) of this section or subdivision (1) of subsection (c) of this  
210 section shall be guilty of a (A) class A misdemeanor for a first offense,  
211 and (B) class D felony for any subsequent offense.

212 (3) Any person who violates the provisions of subdivision (2) of  
213 subsection (c) of this section shall be guilty of a class B misdemeanor.

214 Sec. 6. Section 53a-57 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
215 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

216 (a) A person is guilty of misconduct with a motor vehicle when, with  
217 criminal negligence in the operation of a motor vehicle, [he] such person  
218 causes the death of another person.

219 (b) Misconduct with a motor vehicle is a class [D felony] C felony for  
220 which (1) five years of the sentence imposed may not be suspended or  
221 reduced by the court, or (2) if such person causes the death of a police  
222 officer, as defined in section 7-294a, ten years of the sentence imposed  
223 may not be suspended or reduced by the court.

224 Sec. 7. Section 54-33p of the general statutes is repealed and the  
225 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

226 [(a) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, the existence  
227 of any of the following circumstances shall not constitute in part or in  
228 whole probable cause or reasonable suspicion and shall not be used as  
229 a basis to support any stop or search of a person or motor vehicle:

230 (1) The odor of cannabis or burnt cannabis;

231 (2) The possession of or the suspicion of possession of cannabis  
232 without evidence that the quantity of cannabis is or suspected to be in  
233 excess of five ounces of cannabis plant material, as defined in section  
234 21a-279a, or an equivalent amount of cannabis products or a  
235 combination of cannabis and cannabis products, as provided in  
236 subsection (i) of section 21a-279a; or

237 (3) The presence of cash or currency in proximity to cannabis without



238 evidence that such cash or currency exceeds five hundred dollars.

239 (b) Any evidence discovered as a result of any stop or search  
240 conducted in violation of this section shall not be admissible in evidence  
241 in any trial, hearing or other proceeding in a court of this state.

242 (c)] A law enforcement official may conduct a test for impairment  
243 based on the odor of cannabis or burnt cannabis if such official  
244 reasonably suspects the operator of violating section 14-227a, 14-227m  
245 or 14-227n.

246 [(d) The provisions of this section shall not apply to a probation  
247 officer supervising a probationer who, as a condition of probation, is  
248 prohibited from using or possessing cannabis.]

249 Sec. 8. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioners of Emergency  
250 Services and Public Protection and Transportation shall jointly conduct  
251 a study on the feasibility of implementing a permanent state-wide law  
252 enforcement phlebotomy program to combat impaired driving. Such  
253 study shall include, but need not be limited to, an examination of (1)  
254 best practices for making phlebotomy training available to police  
255 officers, (2) phlebotomy programs and procedures utilized by law  
256 enforcement units in other states, and (3) best practices for providing  
257 educational materials to and answering questions from police officers  
258 regarding phlebotomy training and police liability. Not later than  
259 January 1, 2026, the Commissioners of Emergency Services and Public  
260 Protection and Transportation shall submit a report, in accordance with  
261 the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the results of  
262 the study and any recommendations for legislation to the joint standing  
263 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
264 relating to public safety and security and transportation.

265 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2025*) For purposes of this section,  
266 "law enforcement unit" has the same meaning as provided in section 7-  
267 294a of the general statutes. Not later than July 1, 2026, and annually  
268 thereafter, the Department of Motor Vehicles, in consultation with the  
269 Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, shall conduct

270 safety inspections of vehicles used by law enforcement units in the state  
271 for the purpose of ensuring the safety and functionality of such vehicles.  
272 The department shall randomly select law enforcement units for such  
273 inspections. Upon the completion of each such inspection, the  
274 department shall provide a report on the results of the inspection to the  
275 law enforcement unit whose vehicles were inspected.

276 Sec. 10. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2025*) (a) For purposes of this  
277 subsection, "highway" has the same meaning as provided in section 14-  
278 1 of the general statutes. The Commissioner of Transportation, in  
279 consultation with the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public  
280 Protection, shall establish a traffic safety corridor program to (1)  
281 designate portions of a highway that have high rates of motor vehicle  
282 accidents as traffic safety corridors, and (2) coordinate motor vehicle  
283 enforcement in such traffic safety corridors.

284 (b) The Superior Court shall impose an additional fee equivalent to  
285 one hundred per cent of the fine established or imposed for the violation  
286 of the provisions of section 14-213, 14-213b, 14-214, 14-215, 14-216, 14-  
287 218a, 14-219, 14-220, 14-221, 14-222, 14-222a, as amended by this act, 14-  
288 223, as amended by this act, 14-224, as amended by this act, 14-225, 14-  
289 227a, 14-227m, 14-227n, 14-230, 14-230a, 14-231, 14-232, 14-233, 14-235,  
290 14-236, 14-237, 14-238, 14-238a, 14-239, 14-240, 14-240a, 14-241, 14-242,  
291 14-243, 14-244, 14-245, 14-246a, 14-247, 14-247a, 14-248a, 14-249, 14-250,  
292 14-250a, 14-257, 14-261, 14-266, 14-271, 14-273, 14-279, 14-281a,  
293 subsection (e) or (h) of section 14-283, section 14-289a, 14-289b or 14-  
294 296aa of the general statutes for any such violation committed in a traffic  
295 safety corridor.

296 (c) The Department of Transportation shall post a sign at the  
297 beginning of each traffic safety corridor that shall read as follows:  
298 "TRAFFIC SAFETY CORRIDOR FINES DOUBLED", and at the end of  
299 such corridor that shall read as follows: "END TRAFFIC SAFETY  
300 CORRIDOR".

301 (d) The Division of State Police within the Department of Emergency  
302 Services and Public Protection shall enhance the division's law

303 enforcement efforts in each traffic safety corridor.

304       Sec. 11. (*Effective from passage*) (a) Not later than October 1, 2025, the  
 305 Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall establish  
 306 a one-year pilot program to allow three municipal police departments  
 307 to install a device on such departments' police vehicles that permits a  
 308 police officer to launch a global positioning system onto another vehicle.  
 309 The department may provide financial assistance in the form of grants-  
 310 in-aid to implement such program.

311       (b) Each police department that participates in the program shall  
 312 submit a report regarding the utilization of such devices to the  
 313 Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Not later than  
 314 January 1, 2027, the department shall submit a report, in accordance  
 315 with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint  
 316 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
 317 matters relating to public safety and the judiciary. Such report shall  
 318 include a summary of the results of the pilot program and any  
 319 recommendations concerning the future utilization of such devices.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-96q
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-99g(f) and (g)
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-222a
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-223
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-224(f) and (g)
Sec. 6	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	53a-57
Sec. 7	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	54-33p
Sec. 8	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 9	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 10	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 11	<i>from passage</i>	New section

**PS**       *Joint Favorable Subst.*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

## OFA Fiscal Note

### State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
State Revenues	Various - Potential Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below
Correction, Dept.	GF - Potential Cost	Minimal	Minimal
Department of Motor Vehicles	TF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below
Department of Transportation	TF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Cost	Potential Significant	Potential Significant
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Potential Cost	See Below	None

Note: Various=Various; GF=General Fund; TF=Transportation Fund

### Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Various Municipal Police Departments	Potential Cost	See Below	None

### Explanation

**Section 1** allows tow trucks to use steady blue lights under certain conditions and does not result in a fiscal impact.

**Sections 2 through 6 and 10** increases the penalties for various motor vehicle related violations by (1) increasing maximum fine amounts (including doubling fines for traffic safety corridors), (2) criminalizing certain violations, and (3) requiring mandatory minimums. This results in a potential revenue gain to the state and a potential cost to the

Department of Correction for incarceration. In FY 24, the fine revenue from the associated statutes exceeded \$8 million. On average, the marginal cost to the state for incarcerating an offender for the year is \$3,300.<sup>1</sup> There are currently 76 people incarcerated under these statutes.

**Section 8**, which does not result in a fiscal impact, requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to jointly study the feasibility of a statewide law enforcement phlebotomy program, as described in the bill. A limited law enforcement phlebotomy program currently exists, and DOT has studied the issue in recent years, therefore this section's requirements are within both departments' current expertise.

**Section 9** requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), in consultation with DESPP, to conduct safety inspections for a random selection of law enforcement vehicles. The fiscal impact of this section depends on implementation decisions, including the number and frequency of inspections. It is expected that DMV would perform at least a limited number of inspections within existing operations.

**Section 10** requires DOT, in consultation with DESPP, to establish a traffic safety corridor program. To the extent that traffic safety corridors are designated, this section results in: (1) costs to DOT for program administration and signage (it is typically around \$1,000 to create and install a highway sign, though this can vary depending on size and location); (2) a potential significant cost to DESPP to the extent that they commit additional resources to enforcement;<sup>2</sup> and (3) a potential revenue gain from violations. These fiscal impacts depend on implementation decisions, including the number of designated corridors and the level of increased enforcement.

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<sup>1</sup> Inmate marginal cost is based on increased consumables (e.g. food, clothing, water, sewage, living supplies, etc.) This does not include a change in staffing costs or utility expenses because these would only be realized if a unit or facility opened.

<sup>2</sup> If, for example, the State Police commits 4 troopers to work 3 additional shifts per week, this section would cost DESPP \$448,731 per year per traffic safety corridor, assuming the current average overtime rate of \$89.89 per hour.

**Section 11**, which requires DESPP to establish a one-year pilot program to allow three municipal police departments to install a device on their police vehicles that allows a police officer to launch a GPS onto another vehicle, results in a potential cost to DESPP and a potential cost to municipal police departments in FY 26. The bill allows, but does not require, DESPP to provide grants-in-aid to implement such program at participating municipal police departments. Should a municipal police department choose to participate in the program, there is a potential cost for GPS equipment, unless such equipment is reimbursed by DESPP.<sup>3</sup>

### ***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to implementation and enforcement decisions, the number of violations, and inflation.

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<sup>3</sup> The cost of equipping a department with such a vehicle-mounted GPS launching device is not expected to cost about \$6,000 per vehicle. The annual software subscription can cost up to \$150,000 per department.

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**OLR Bill Analysis****HB 7204**

**AN ACT CONCERNING LIGHTS ON VEHICLES, PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF CERTAIN STATUTES, STOPS AND SEARCHES, A PHLEBOTOMY PROGRAM STUDY, INSPECTIONS OF CERTAIN VEHICLES, TRAFFIC SAFETY CORRIDORS AND A PILOT PROGRAM TO EQUIP POLICE VEHICLES WITH CERTAIN DEVICES.**

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Allows wreckers to use steady blue lights and any combination of steady or flashing yellow and amber lights; limits the use of these lights to times while the wrecker is stationary; allows fire and emergency medical service personnel to use steady lights in the colors they can use under existing law for flashing lights

[§§ 2-6 — INCREASED PENALTIES](#)

Increases the penalties for various motor vehicle-related violations, including by increasing the maximum fine amounts, criminalizing certain violations, and requiring mandatory minimums for others

[§ 7 — CANNABIS ODOR](#)

Allows certain circumstances (e.g., odor of cannabis) to be used to support a stop or search of a person or motor vehicle

[§ 8 — PHLEBOTOMY FEASIBILITY STUDY](#)

Requires the DESPP and DOT commissioners to jointly conduct a feasibility study on implementing a permanent statewide law enforcement phlebotomy program to combat impaired driving

[§ 9 — SAFETY VEHICLE INSPECTIONS](#)

Requires the DMV to annually conduct safety inspections on vehicles used by Connecticut law enforcement units

[§ 10 — TRAFFIC SAFETY CORRIDORS](#)

Requires the (1) DOT commissioner to establish and designate parts of a highway with high rates of motor vehicle accidents as traffic safety corridors and (2) Superior Court to double the base fine of certain violations

#### § 11 — POLICE USE OF GPS PILOT PROGRAM

Requires DESPP to establish a one-year pilot program to allow three municipal police departments to install a device on their police vehicles that allows a police officer to launch a GPS onto another vehicle

#### BACKGROUND

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill makes various unrelated changes to motor vehicle-related laws. It also requires annual inspection of certain law enforcement vehicles and establishes a pilot program to allow police officers to launch a global positioning system (GPS) on another vehicle.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025, unless otherwise noted

#### **§ 1 — FLASHING AND STEADY LIGHTS**

*Allows wreckers to use steady blue lights and any combination of steady or flashing yellow and amber lights; limits the use of these lights to times while the wrecker is stationary; allows fire and emergency medical service personnel to use steady lights in the colors they can use under existing law for flashing lights*

By law, registered wreckers may use steady or flashing yellow or amber lights while operating on the road or while stationary. The bill additionally allows them to use steady blue lights and specifies that they may use a combination of yellow and amber lights. However, it limits the use of all of these lights (yellow, amber, and blue) to times when the vehicle is stationary.

It also allows fire and emergency medical service personnel who are authorized to use flashing blue or red lights under existing law to also use steady lights in those colors. Under current law, only police officers and Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) inspectors operating a state or local police vehicle may use steady red, blue, or red and blue lights, visible from the vehicle's front; the bill eliminates this restriction.



The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

## **§§ 2-6 — INCREASED PENALTIES**

*Increases the penalties for various motor vehicle-related violations, including by increasing the maximum fine amounts, criminalizing certain violations, and requiring mandatory minimums for others*

The bill increases the penalties for various motor vehicle-related violations. It increases the maximum fine amounts, criminalizes certain violations, and requires mandatory minimums for others.

### ***Obstructed or Tinted Windows (§ 2)***

The bill criminalizes the following violations by subjecting them to the penalties for reckless driving:

1. operating a vehicle with an object obstructing the operator's view of the road or with a tinted windshield in violation of state law;
2. selling, offering for sale, or delivering a motor vehicle in Connecticut with a tinted windshield or window in violation of state law; and
3. failing to present a vehicle to DMV by July 1, 2026, to receive and put a sticker on any aftermarket tinted window to indicate compliance with the law.

The penalty for reckless driving is (1) a fine of between \$100 and \$300, up to 30 days imprisonment, or both, for a first offense, and (2) a fine of up to \$600, up to one year imprisonment, or both, for subsequent offenses. Under current law, these obstructed or tinted window violations are infractions.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

### ***Negligent Operation of a Vehicle (§ 3)***

The bill increases the maximum penalty for negligently operating a motor vehicle that causes the death of another person. It does so by increasing the penalty from a fine of up to \$3,000, up to three years imprisonment, or both, to a class C felony, which is punishable by up to

10 years imprisonment, up to a \$10,000 fine, or both.

***Failure to Stop for and Evading a Police Officer (§ 4)***

The bill also increases the maximum penalties for failing to stop for or obey a police officer and attempting to evade a police officer.

It increases, from an infraction to a class A misdemeanor (punishable by up to 364 days imprisonment, up to a \$2,000 fine, or both), the penalty for failing to stop a motor vehicle upon a uniformed officer's signal or disobeying the officer about operating the vehicle.

It also increases, from a class A misdemeanor to a class D felony (punishable by up to five years imprisonment, up to a \$5,000 fine, or both), the penalty for increasing a vehicle's speed in an attempt to escape or elude a police officer after being signaled to stop.

***Evasion of Responsibility in Operating Motor Vehicle (§ 5)***

Under existing law, a driver knowingly involved in an accident that causes serious physical injury to or the death of another person must immediately stop; render necessary aid; and give his or her name, address, and driver's license and registration information to the injured person, a police officer, or a person who witnessed the death or serious injury. If unable to do so for any reason, the driver must immediately report the death or serious injury and provide the required information to law enforcement along with the location and circumstances of the accident.

Under current law, anyone who violates these requirements is guilty of a class B felony, which is punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment, up to a \$15,000 fine, or both. The bill imposes a mandatory minimum sentence of five years for violations.

Existing law imposes substantially similar requirements for operators who cause any physical injury, whether or not it is serious. Currently violations of these requirements are a class D felony. The bill imposes a mandatory minimum sentence of two years for these violations.

**Misconduct with a Motor Vehicle (§6)**

The bill increases the penalty for misconduct with a motor vehicle from a class D felony to a class C felony, with a (1) five-year mandatory minimum sentence or (2) 10-year mandatory minimum sentence if the person causes the death of a police officer.

By law and for this provision, “police officers” are sworn members of an organized local police department or the State Police; appointed constables who perform criminal law enforcement duties; special police officers appointed under law (e.g., public assistance fraud investigators); or any members of a law enforcement unit who perform police duties (CGS § 7-294a(9)).

**§ 7 — CANNABIS ODOR**

*Allows certain circumstances (e.g., odor of cannabis) to be used to support a stop or search of a person or motor vehicle*

The bill eliminates the provision in current law prohibiting the following circumstances from constituting probable cause or reasonable suspicion or being used as the basis to support any stop or search of a person or motor vehicle:

1. the possession or suspected possession of up to five ounces of cannabis plant material (or an equivalent amount of cannabis products or combination of cannabis and cannabis products);
2. the presence of cash or currency near the cannabis, unless there is evidence that the cash or currency exceeds \$500; or
3. the odor of cannabis or burnt cannabis.

The bill retains a provision in existing law explicitly allowing law enforcement officers to conduct a test for impairment based on cannabis odor if the officer reasonably suspects that a motor vehicle’s operator or passenger is violating the impaired driving laws. The bill also makes a conforming change.

**§ 8 — PHLEBOTOMY FEASIBILITY STUDY**

*Requires the DESPP and DOT commissioners to jointly conduct a feasibility study on implementing a permanent statewide law enforcement phlebotomy program to combat impaired driving*

The bill requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) and Department of Transportation (DOT) commissioners to jointly study the feasibility of implementing a permanent statewide law enforcement phlebotomy program to combat impaired driving.

The study must include an examination of:

1. best practices for (a) making phlebotomy training available to police officers and (b) providing educational materials to and answering questions from police officers on the training and police liability; and
2. phlebotomy programs and procedures law enforcement units use in other states.

Under the bill, DESPP and DOT must report the study's findings and any legislative recommendations to the Public Safety and Transportation committees by January 1, 2026.

## **§ 9 — SAFETY VEHICLE INSPECTIONS**

*Requires the DMV to annually conduct safety inspections on vehicles used by Connecticut law enforcement units*

The bill requires the DMV, annually by July 1, 2026, and in consultation with DESPP, to conduct safety inspections on vehicles used by Connecticut law enforcement units to ensure each vehicle's safety and functionality. DMV must randomly select law enforcement units for the inspections. When the inspection is complete, DMV must report the inspection results to the law enforcement units whose vehicles were inspected.

By law and for this provision, a "law enforcement unit" is any state or municipal agency or department (or tribal agency or department created and governed under a memorandum of agreement) whose primary functions include enforcing criminal or traffic laws; preserving

public order; protecting life and property; or preventing, detecting, or investigating crime (CGS § 7-294a(8)).

## § 10 — TRAFFIC SAFETY CORRIDORS

*Requires the (1) DOT commissioner to establish and designate parts of a highway with high rates of motor vehicle accidents as traffic safety corridors and (2) Superior Court to double the base fine of certain violations*

The bill requires the DOT commissioner, in consultation with the DESPP commissioner, to establish a traffic safety corridor program to (1) designate parts of a highway (i.e. public road) with high rates of motor vehicle accidents as traffic safety corridors, and (2) coordinate motor vehicle enforcement in these corridors.

Under the bill, the Superior Court must double the base fine established or imposed for the violations listed in the table below. Most of the violations are infractions, which carry a base fine of between \$50 and \$90. Several of them have base fines greater than \$1,000. The highest fine is \$10,000 (for operating a school bus while impaired, or for negligent homicide with a motor vehicle, as amended by the bill).

**Table: Motor Vehicle Violations with Additional Fines**

<b>Statute</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
14-213	Failure to carry a driver's license
14-213b	Operation of a motor vehicle without the statutorily required car insurance
14-214	Improper instruction of an unlicensed person in motor vehicle operation
14-215	Operation of a motor vehicle while registration or license is suspended
14-216	Operation of a motor vehicle by a person under age 18 without insurance
14-218a	Operation at unreasonable rate of speed
14-219	Speeding
14-220	Slow speed, impeding traffic; failure to use flashing lights
14-221	Operation of a low-speed vehicle carrying passengers for hire without a permit
14-222	Reckless driving
14-222a	Negligent homicide with a motor vehicle

<b>Statute</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
14-223	Failure to obey signal of officer
14-224	Evading responsibility after a motor vehicle accident; operating a motor vehicle for racing contests, demonstrations of speed or skill, or street takeovers; not moving a vehicle after an accident
14-225	Evading responsibility for injury or damage when operating other vehicles
14-227a	Driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol or drugs
14-227m	DUI with a child passenger
14-227n	DUI in a school bus
14-230	Failure to drive on the right
14-230a	Improper usage of left lane by commercial motor vehicles, school buses, buses, or vehicles with trailers
14-231	Failure to keep to right when meeting opposing traffic
14-232	Improper passing or failure to yield to passing vehicle
14-233	Passing on right
14-235	Failure to keep to right on curve or grade, or when approaching intersection
14-236	Failure to drive in proper lane on multiple-lane highway
14-237	Driving the wrong way on divided highway
14-238	Improper entry to or exit from controlled access highway
14-238a	Improper entry to limited access highway
14-239	Driving the wrong way on one-way highway or rotaries; failure to grant right of way to vehicle in rotary
14-240	Failure to drive a reasonable distance apart
14-240a	Failure to drive a reasonable distance apart with intent to harass or intimidate
14-241	Improper turn
14-242	Failure to give proper signal for a turn; failure to grant rights of way
14-243	Unsafe starting or backing of vehicle
14-244	Improper signaling for turns or stopping
14-245	Failure to grant right of way at an intersection
14-246a	Failure to grant right of way at a highway junction
14-247	Failure to yield when emerging from driveway or private road
14-247a	Failure to grant right of way when emerging from alley, driveway, or building
14-248a	Failure to reduce speed or stop at cattle crossing
14-249	Failure to obey signal at railroad crossing

<b>Statute</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
14-250	Failure of commercial or public service motor vehicle to stop at railroad crossing
14-250a	Improper operation of motor vehicle on sidewalk
14-257	Improper seating of passengers
14-261	Improper distance between wrecker and towed vehicle; improper pushing of a vehicle
14-266	Operation of a vehicle of over four tons' capacity on restricted highway
14-271	Operation of a vehicle improperly loaded or constructed to carry load
14-273	Improper seating of passengers on a vehicle for which a passenger endorsement or passenger and school endorsement is required; exceeding capacity of said vehicle
14-279	Improper passing of a standing school bus
14-281a	Operation of school bus at excessive speed; failure to display lighted headlamps while transporting school children
14-283(e)	Failure to stop on right side of road
14-283(h)	Obstruction of an emergency vehicle
14-289a	Improper seating of self or passengers on motorcycle
14-289b	Improper operation of a motorcycle or autocycle
14-296aa	Distracted driving

Under the bill, DOT must post a sign at the beginning of each traffic safety corridor stating the fines are doubled and at the end stating the corridor has ended.

The bill also requires the State Police to enhance its enforcement efforts in each corridor.

## **§ 11 — POLICE USE OF GPS PILOT PROGRAM**

*Requires DESPP to establish a one-year pilot program to allow three municipal police departments to install a device on their police vehicles that allows a police officer to launch a GPS onto another vehicle*

By October 1, 2025, the bill requires DESPP to establish a one-year pilot program to allow three municipal police departments to install a device on their police vehicles that allows a police officer to launch a GPS (presumably, a GPS tracking device) onto another vehicle (see

BACKGROUND). DESPP may provide grants-in-aid to implement the program.

Each participating police department must submit a report on the utilization of the devices to DESPP. By January 1, 2027, DESPP must submit a report to the Public Safety and Security and Judiciary committees. The report must include a summary of the pilot program results and any recommendations for future utilization of the device.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Related Court Cases***

In *U.S. v. Jones*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that placing a GPS tracking device on someone's vehicle constitutes a "search" within the meaning of the Fourth Amendment, which prohibits unreasonable searches (565 U.S. 400 (2012)). Although the Court in that case did not rule on whether a warrant is required for police to place a GPS on a person, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals subsequently held that law enforcement agents must have a warrant based on probable cause to attach a GPS to a car to track its movements (*U.S. v. Katzin*, 769 F.3d 163 (3d Cir. 2014)).

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    29    Nay   0    (03/18/2025)