



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 274

January Session, 2001

Substitute House Bill No. 6285

House of Representatives, April 12, 2001

The Committee on Transportation reported through REP. COCCO of the 127th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF FLASHING WHITE HEAD LAMPS BY FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL PERSONNEL.

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

1 Subsection (a) of section 14-96p of the general statutes is repealed
2 and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

3 (a) (1) No person shall display upon any motor vehicle any light
4 visible from the front thereof other than white, yellow or amber, or any
5 light other than red, yellow, amber or white visible from the rear
6 thereof, except a light used with any school bus, without a written
7 permit from the commissioner. If the Department of Transportation
8 obtains from the commissioner such a permit covering more than one
9 motor vehicle operated by the department, it may display the lights
10 allowed under the permit on each such vehicle without placing a copy
11 of the permit in each vehicle.

12 (2) Any vehicle accommodating fifteen or [less] fewer handicapped

13 students may use a flashing red light or lights during the time such
14 vehicle is stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging such
15 handicapped students, any motor bus may carry a purple light or
16 lights, any interstate public service vehicle may carry a green light or
17 lights, any taxicab may carry a lunar white light or lights, and any
18 interstate commercial motor vehicle may display green identification
19 lights, in front thereof, as the commissioner may permit.

20 (3) A vehicle being operated by the chief executive officer of an
21 emergency medical service organization, as defined in section 19a-175,
22 an ambulance, as defined in section 19a-175, [or] a vehicle being
23 operated by a local fire marshal or a local director of emergency
24 management may use a flashing red light or lights or flashing white
25 head lamps and a flashing amber light while on the way to the scene of
26 an emergency, except that an ambulance may use flashing lights of
27 other colors specified by federal requirements for the manufacture of
28 such vehicle. The chief executive officer of each such organization shall
29 provide annually during the month of January, on forms provided by
30 the commissioner, such officer's name and address and the registration
31 number on the number plate or plates of the vehicle on which the
32 authorized red light is or white head lamps and amber light are to be
33 used. A vehicle being operated by a member of a volunteer fire
34 department or company or a volunteer emergency medical technician
35 may use flashing white head lamps, provided such member or
36 emergency medical technician is on the way to the scene of a fire or
37 medical emergency and has received written authorization from the
38 chief law enforcement officer of the municipality to use such head
39 lamps. Such head lamps shall only be used within the municipality
40 granting such authorization. Such authorization may be revoked for
41 use of such head lamps in violation of this subdivision.

42 (4) Flashing or revolving white lights may not be displayed upon a
43 motor vehicle except [(1)] (A) on fire emergency apparatus, [(2)] (B) on
44 motor vehicles of paid and volunteer fire chiefs and their first and

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Affected Agencies: Department of Motor Vehicles

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

State and Municipal Impact:

This bill would have no fiscal impact on either the state or municipalities. The bill allows any vehicle operated by volunteer fire department members or volunteer emergency medical technicians to use flashing white headlamps on the way to a fire scene or medical emergency. The volunteer must obtain written authorization from the town's chief law enforcement officer to use flashing headlamps.

It is not known how many of the state's 23,000 volunteer firefighters and 8,000 volunteer emergency medical technicians would receive authorization to use such lights. However, the flashing headlamps would only be authorized to volunteers who already have been issued emergency lights, and who are already paying the Department of Motor Vehicles' annual fee of \$7 for each vehicle.

It is anticipated that each volunteer would pay for his or her own flashing headlamps. Flashing headlamps cost about \$35 to purchase, and about \$110 installed.

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6285

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF FLASHING WHITE HEAD LAMPS BY FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL PERSONNEL.**SUMMARY:**

This bill allows any vehicle operated by volunteer fire department members or volunteer emergency medical technicians to use flashing white headlamps on the way to a fire scene or medical emergency. The vehicle operator must get written authorization from the town's chief law enforcement officer and may only use the headlamps in the town. The authorization may be revoked for violation.

Under current law, the following may use flashing white head lamps on their way to an emergency: (1) local fire marshals and emergency management directors and (2) ambulances and vehicles being operated by the chief executive officer of an emergency medical service organization. By law, the chief executive of these organizations must provide the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner every January with the name, address, and registration number plates of vehicles that will use flashing white head lamps. It is not clear if this requirement applies to the groups the bill adds.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2001

BACKGROUND***Flashing Lights***

Another law, which this bill does not change, generally prohibits flashing lights on vehicles other than school buses, except to indicate a turn and, in certain designated colors, on:

1. vehicles used by volunteer or civil preparedness fire companies;

2. certain emergency and maintenance vehicles (with a DMV) permit;
3. overweight or oversize vehicles with Department of Transportation permits or their escort vehicles;
4. vehicles used by rural mail carriers;
5. vehicles for 15 or fewer handicapped students when the vehicles stop to pick up or let off students;
6. stationary vehicles at a fire scene;
7. rescue vehicles;
8. ambulances;
9. vehicles used by local fire marshals or directors of emergency management;
10. vehicles used by chief executive officers of emergency medical service organizations; and
11. vehicles used by members of volunteer ambulance associations or companies.

The law also allows motorists to use flashing lights in certain contexts where they are traveling slowly or disabled and stopped in areas that can create a hazard.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 22 Nay 0

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 28 Nay 0

