



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 206

February Session, 2024

Senate Bill No. 233

Senate, April 3, 2024

The Committee on Public Safety and Security reported through SEN. GASTON of the 23rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT AUTHORIZING USE OF STEADY BLUE LIGHTS ON WRECKERS.

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

1 Section 1. Section 14-96q of the 2024 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective October 1, 2024*):

4 (a) A permit is required for the use of colored or flashing lights on all
5 motor vehicles or equipment specified in this section except: (1) Motor
6 vehicles not registered in this state used for transporting or escorting
7 any vehicle or load, or combinations thereof, which is either oversize or
8 overweight, or both, when operating under a permit issued by the
9 Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to section 14-270; [or] (2)
10 motor vehicles or equipment that are (A) equipped with lights in
11 accordance with this section, (B) owned or leased by the federal
12 government, the state of Connecticut, or any other state, commonwealth
13 or local municipality, and (C) registered to such governmental entity; or
14 (3) wreckers registered pursuant to section 14-66 that are equipped with

15 lights in accordance with subsection (k) of this section. When used in
16 this section, the term "flashing" shall be considered to include the term
17 "revolving".

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

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

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

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

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

72 (f) The commissioner may issue a permit for a yellow or amber light
73 or lights, including a flashing yellow or amber light or lights, which may
74 be used on motor vehicles or equipment that are (1) specified in
75 subsection (e) of this section, (2) maintenance vehicles, or (3) vehicles
76 transporting or escorting any vehicle or load or combinations thereof,
77 which is or are either oversize or overweight, or both, and being
78 operated or traveling under a permit issued by the Commissioner of
79 Transportation pursuant to section 14-270. A yellow or amber light or
80 lights, including a flashing yellow or amber light or lights, may be used
81 without obtaining a permit from the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles

82 [on wreckers registered pursuant to section 14-66,] on vehicles of
83 carriers in rural mail delivery service or on vehicles operated by
84 construction inspectors employed by the state of Connecticut,
85 authorized by the Commissioner of Transportation, used during the
86 performance of inspections on behalf of the state. The Commissioner of
87 Transportation shall maintain a list of such authorized construction
88 inspectors, including the name and address of each inspector and the
89 registration number for each vehicle on which the light or lights are to
90 be used.

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

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

112 (i) The commissioner may issue a permit for ambulances, as defined
113 in section 19a-175, which may, in addition to the flashing light or lights
114 allowed in subsection (h) of this section, use flashing lights of other

115 colors specified by federal requirements for the manufacture of an
116 ambulance. If the commissioner issues a permit for any ambulance, such
117 permit shall be issued at the time of registration and upon each renewal
118 of such registration.

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

123 (k) A yellow or amber light or lights, including a flashing yellow or
124 amber light or lights, or any combination thereof, or a blue light or
125 lights, which may only be illuminated as a steady blue light or lights
126 while the wrecker is stationary, may be used on a wrecker registered
127 pursuant to section 14-66.

128 [(k)] (l) No person [, other than a police officer or inspector of the
129 Department of Motor Vehicles operating a state or local police vehicle,]
130 shall operate a motor vehicle displaying a steady blue or steady red
131 illuminated light or both steady blue and steady red illuminated lights
132 that are visible externally from the front of the vehicle, except for a (1)
133 police officer or inspector of the Department of Motor Vehicles
134 operating a state or local police vehicle, or (2) person operating a
135 wrecker and displaying a steady blue illuminated light while the
136 wrecker is stationary as provided in subsection (k) of this section.

137 [(l)] (m) Use of colored and flashing lights except as authorized by
138 this section shall be an infraction.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2024	14-96q

PS Joint Favorable

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:** None**Municipal Impact:** None**Explanation**

The bill, which does not result in a fiscal impact, authorizes the use of steady blue lights on wreckers (i.e., tow trucks).

The Out Years**State Impact:** None**Municipal Impact:** None

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 233*****AN ACT AUTHORIZING USE OF STEADY BLUE LIGHTS ON WRECKERS.*****SUMMARY**

By law, registered wreckers may use steady or flashing yellow or amber lights. The bill further allows them to use (1) any combination of steady or flashing yellow and amber lights and (2) steady blue lights while the wrecker is stationary. The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

Under existing law and the bill, registered wreckers may use these lights without getting a permit from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner.

Existing law, unchanged by the bill, also allows police officers and DMV inspectors operating a state or local police vehicle to use steady red, blue, or red and blue lights, visible from the vehicle's front.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 24 Nay 1 (03/19/2024)