

§ 20-217. Motor vehicles to stop for properly marked and designated school buses in certain instances; evidence of identity of driver.

(a) When a school bus is displaying its mechanical stop signal or flashing red lights and the bus is stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging passengers, the driver of any other vehicle that approaches the school bus from any direction on the same street, highway, or public vehicular area shall bring that other vehicle to a full stop and shall remain stopped. The driver of the other vehicle shall not proceed to move, pass, or attempt to pass the school bus until after the mechanical stop signal has been withdrawn, the flashing red stoplights have been turned off, and the bus has started to move.

(b) For the purpose of this section, a school bus includes a public school bus transporting children or school personnel, a public school bus transporting senior citizens under G.S. 115C-243, or a privately owned bus transporting children. This section applies only in the event the school bus bears upon the front and rear a plainly visible sign containing the words "school bus."

(c) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the driver of a vehicle traveling in the opposite direction from the school bus, upon any road, highway or city street that has been divided into two roadways, so constructed as to separate vehicular traffic between the two roadways by an intervening space (including a center lane for left turns if the roadway consists of at least four more lanes) or by a physical barrier, need not stop upon meeting and passing any school bus that has stopped in the roadway across the dividing space or physical barrier.

(d) It shall be unlawful for any school bus driver to stop and receive or discharge passengers or for any principal or superintendent of any school, routing a school bus, to authorize the driver of any school bus to stop and receive or discharge passengers upon any roadway described by subsection (c) of this section where passengers would be required to cross the roadway to reach their destination or to board the bus; provided, that passengers may be discharged or received at points where pedestrians and vehicular traffic are controlled by adequate stop-and-go traffic signals.

(e) Except as provided in subsection (g) of this section, any person violating this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. A person who violates subsection (a) of this section shall not receive a prayer for judgment continued under any circumstances.

(f) Expired.

(g) Any person who willfully violates subsection (a) of this section and strikes any person shall be guilty of a Class I felony. Any person who willfully violates subsection (a) of this section and strikes any person, resulting in the death of that person, shall be guilty of a Class H felony.

(h) Automated camera and video recording systems may be used to detect and prosecute violations of this section. Any photograph or video recorded by a camera or video recording system shall, if consistent with the North Carolina Rules of Evidence, be admissible as evidence in any proceeding alleging a violation of subsection (a) of this section. (1925, c. 265; 1943, c. 767; 1947, c. 527; 1955, c. 1365; 1959, c. 909; 1965, c. 370; 1969, c. 952; 1971, c. 245, s. 1; 1973, c. 1330, s. 35; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1280, s. 4; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1323; 1983, c. 779, s. 1; 1985, c. 700, s. 1; 1991, c. 290, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 382; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1998-149, s. 10; 2005-204, s. 1; 2006-160, s. 1; 2006-259, s. 11(a); 2007-382, s. 1; 2009-147, ss. 1, 2.)