

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 740

Short Title: Defined Merging Areas/Zipper Merge. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Turner, Greene, Pless, and Farkas (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Transportation, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

May 3, 2021

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE RULES OF THE ROAD WITH RESPECT TO MERGING
3 AT DEFINED MERGING AREAS AND REQUIRING DRIVERS EDUCATION ON THE
4 ZIPPER MERGE.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** Part 10 of Article 3 of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes is amended
7 by adding a new section to read:

8 "**§ 20-156.1. Merging at defined merging areas.**

9 The driver of a vehicle entering a defined merging area where two lanes of traffic of a
10 highway merge into one shall operate the vehicle in a way that does not block the flow of traffic
11 in either lane. Each driver entering the defined merging area shall adjust their vehicle's speed and
12 lateral position to avoid a collision with another vehicle, having due regard for the speed of other
13 vehicles and the condition of the highway. When vehicles in separate lanes approach a defined
14 merging area at approximately the same time and there is not reasonable distance between the
15 vehicles to ensure a safe merger, the drivers of the vehicles shall alternate yielding the
16 right-of-way, beginning with the right-most vehicle, until there is no longer a queue at the
17 merging point."

18 **SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 20-88.1 reads as rewritten:

19 "**§ 20-88.1. Driver education.**

20 ...

21 (d) The Division shall prepare a driver license handbook that explains the traffic laws of
22 the ~~State~~ State, including a description of the zipper merge, as defined in G.S. 115C-215, and
23 shall periodically revise the handbook to reflect changes in these laws. The Division, in
24 consultation with the State Highway Patrol, the North Carolina Sheriff's Association, and the
25 North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police, shall include in the driver license handbook a
26 description of law enforcement procedures during traffic stops and the actions that a motorist
27 should take during a traffic stop, including appropriate interactions with law enforcement
28 officers. At the request of the Department of Public Instruction, the Division shall provide free
29 copies of the handbook to that Department for use in the program of driver education offered at
30 public high schools."

31 **SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 115C-215 reads as rewritten:

32 "**§ 115C-215. Administration of driver education program by the Department of Public**
33 **Instruction.**

34 ...

35 (b) The driver education curriculum shall include the following:



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1 ...
2 (6) Instruction on the zipper merge. For purposes of this subdivision, "zipper
3 merge" means drivers use both lanes of traffic until reaching the defined
4 merge area, and then alternate yielding the right-of-way into the single lane.
5"

6 **SECTION 3.** Section 1 of this act becomes effective October 1, 2021, and applies to
7 motor vehicle offenses charged on or after that date. Section 2(a) of this act becomes effective
8 January 1, 2022. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning
9 with the 2022-2023 school year.