

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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SENATE BILL 809

Short Title: Winston-Salem Civilian Traffic Investigators. (Local)

Sponsors: Senator Lowe (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

May 27, 2022

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF WINSTON-SALEM TO EMPLOY AND ALLOW
3 CIVILIAN PERSONNEL TO INVESTIGATE TRAFFIC CRASHES INVOLVING ONLY
4 PROPERTY DAMAGE.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** Article XVI of the Charter of the City of Winston-Salem, being
7 Chapter 232 of the Private Laws of 1927, as amended, is amended by adding a new section to
8 read as follows:

9 "Sec. 117.1. Civilian Traffic Investigators. – (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law,
10 the City may employ and allow civilian personnel to investigate traffic crashes and issue citations
11 for infractions under Chapter 20 of the General Statutes related to the traffic crashes investigated.
12 The civilian personnel shall be known as "Civilian Traffic Investigators."

13 (b) All of the following shall apply to Civilian Traffic Investigators (hereinafter
14 "Investigator" or "Investigators") employed by the City:

- 15 (1) The City shall establish the minimum standards for employment as an
16 Investigator.
- 17 (2) Each Investigator shall attend a training program designed by the City of
18 Winston-Salem Police Department in consultation with the North Carolina
19 Justice Academy. Upon completion of the training program, each Investigator
20 shall spend not less than four weeks of field training with a law enforcement
21 officer who has experience conducting traffic crash investigations.
- 22 (3) Each Investigator shall be issued credentials by the City identifying the
23 individual as a Civilian Traffic Investigator. The Investigator shall produce
24 official credentials at any time when requested by a member of the public
25 involved in or a witness to a crash.
- 26 (4) Investigators shall be issued a uniform that is substantially different in color
27 and style from that of a law enforcement officer for the City. The uniform
28 shall have patches that clearly identify the individual as an Investigator, and
29 the individual's name shall be clearly displayed on the uniform. Investigators
30 shall not be issued badges.
- 31 (5) Any vehicles issued to, or used by, an Investigator shall not bear markings or
32 symbols that identify the vehicle as a police vehicle. The vehicle may have
33 emergency equipment and lights installed but shall not use blue lights in any
34 manner or form. Red and amber lights are permissible.
- 35 (6) Investigators shall not be issued a weapon of any type.
- 36 (7) Investigators shall have no authority to arrest or issue criminal process.



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- 1 (8) Investigators shall investigate crashes involving only property damage.
- 2 Investigators shall comply with all provisions of G.S. 20-166.1. A report
- 3 completed by an Investigator shall be treated the same as if it were completed
- 4 by a law enforcement officer for purposes of G.S. 20-166.1(i). A law
- 5 enforcement officer shall investigate any crash involving personal injury or a
- 6 fatality.
- 7 (9) Investigators shall have the same authority as a law enforcement officer to tow
- 8 or remove a vehicle that is obstructing a public street or highway."

9 **SECTION 2.** Not later than December 31, 2023, the City of Winston-Salem shall
10 submit to the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety
11 and the Senate Committee on Appropriations on Justice and Public Safety a written report on the
12 training and use of Civilian Traffic Investigators, as authorized in Section 1 of this act, for the
13 period commencing on the effective date of this act and concluding November 1, 2023.

14 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.