

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 137
(Delegate Carr)
Environment and Transportation

Vehicle Laws – Intersections – Prohibited Acts

This bill generally prohibits a vehicle facing a circular green signal, a green arrow signal, or a steady yellow signal from entering an intersection if the vehicle is unable to completely proceed through the intersection. However, a vehicle making a left turn at a circular green signal may enter an intersection while yielding the right-of-way to a pedestrian or to a vehicle approaching from the opposite direction, and a vehicle making a right turn may enter an intersection while yielding the right-of-way to a pedestrian or bicyclist.

A police officer may not issue a citation for a violation unless the approach to the intersection has appropriate signage installed in accordance with the Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices notifying the public that a vehicle may not make a movement at the intersection that violates the bill's provisions. A violation is a misdemeanor subject to the existing penalty of a \$500 maximum fine.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund revenues are not materially affected. To the extent that the State Highway Administration (SHA) opts to install signage as contemplated in the bill, Transportation Trust Fund expenditures may increase, as discussed below. Otherwise, enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: To the extent local governments opt to install signage as contemplated in the bill, local government expenditures may increase. Otherwise, enforcement can be handled with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law:

Green Traffic Signals

Circular Green Signal: Vehicular traffic facing a circular green signal may proceed straight through the intersection or, unless a sign otherwise prohibits the turn, turn right or left. A vehicle proceeding straight or turning right or left at a circular green signal must yield the right-of-way to a vehicle or pedestrian lawfully in the intersection or adjacent crosswalk.

Green Arrow Signal: Vehicular traffic facing a green arrow signal may cautiously enter the intersection only to make the movement indicated by the arrow or by another indication shown at the same time as the arrow. Vehicular traffic facing a green arrow signal must, when making an authorized movement, yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian or bicycle lawfully within the adjacent crosswalk and to other traffic lawfully using the intersection.

Penalties: A violation of these provisions is a misdemeanor, and a violator is subject to a maximum fine of \$500. The prepayment penalty established by the District Court is \$90, and the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) must assess one point against a violator's license. If, however, the violation contributes to an accident, the prepayment penalty is \$130, and MVA must assess three points against the violator's license.

Red Traffic Signals

Required Stop: Vehicular traffic facing a steady red signal alone or a steady red arrow (unless entering the intersection to make a movement permitted by another signal) must stop at the near side of the intersection (1) at a clearly marked stop sign; (2) if there is no clearly marked stop sign, before entering any crosswalk; or (3) if there is no crosswalk, before entering the intersection. Traffic generally must remain stopped until a signal to proceed is displayed.

A violation is a misdemeanor, and a violator is subject to a maximum fine of \$500. The prepayment penalty established by the District Court is \$140, and MVA must assess two points against a violator's license. If, however, the violation contributes to an accident, the prepayment penalty is \$180, and MVA must assess three points against the violator's license.

Authorized Turns: Unless a sign prohibiting a turn is in place, vehicular traffic facing a steady red signal may, after stopping, cautiously enter the intersection and make (1) a right turn; (2) a left turn from a one-way street onto a one-way street; or (3) a turn as indicated by a sign. Such traffic must yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian or bicycle lawfully within an adjacent crosswalk and to any vehicle in the intersection or approaching on another roadway so closely as to constitute an immediate hazard.

A violation of these provisions is a misdemeanor, and a violator is subject to a maximum fine of \$500. The prepayment penalty assessed by the District Court is \$90 or, if a violation contributes to an accident, \$130. MVA must assess two points on the violator's license or, if the violation contributes to an accident, three points. For a failure to yield the intersection right-of-way after a turn on a red signal, MVA must assess one point against the violator's license or, if the violation contributes to an accident, three points.

Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

The Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices contains the national Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, which includes national standards and federal guidance pertaining to traffic control devices, and State supplemental guidance.

State/Local Expenditures: As noted above, a police officer may not issue a citation for a violation of the bill unless the approach to the intersection has specified signage alerting drivers to the bill's prohibition. SHA and/or local governments may incur costs to the extent that they choose to install signage as contemplated in the bill. *For illustrative purposes*, SHA estimates costs of approximately \$2,300 per intersection, including signage and labor costs. However, the bill does not require the installation of signs. Thus, it is assumed that any signage installed as a result of the bill is optional.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 553 of 2021 received a hearing in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, but no further action was taken. Its cross file, HB 311, passed in the House and was referred to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, but no further action was taken. HB 70 of 2020 passed the House as amended and was scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, but the hearing was canceled. In addition, similar bills were introduced in the 2017 through 2019 sessions.

Designated Cross File: SB 87 (Senator Young) - Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): Caroline, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Elizabeth J. Allison

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510