



General Assembly

January Session, 2019

Committee Bill No. 5658

LCO No. 5803



Referred to Committee on PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

Introduced by:
(PS)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF RED AND BLUE LIGHTS ON VEHICLES OPERATED BY POLICE OFFICERS.

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

1 Section 1. Section 14-96q of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2019*):

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

15 (b) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, or such other person

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

23 (c) A blue light or lights, including flashing blue lights, but not
24 including a steady blue illuminated light visible from the front of a
25 vehicle, may be used on a motor vehicle operated by an active member
26 of a volunteer fire department or company or an active member of an
27 organized civil preparedness auxiliary fire company who has been
28 issued a permit by the chief executive officer of such department or
29 company to use such a light while on the way to or at the scene of a
30 fire or other emergency requiring such member's services. Such permit
31 shall be on a form provided by the commissioner and may be revoked
32 by such chief executive officer or successor. The chief executive officer
33 of each volunteer fire department or company or organized civil
34 preparedness auxiliary fire company shall keep on file, on forms
35 provided by the commissioner, the names and addresses of members
36 who have been authorized to use flashing blue lights as provided in
37 this subsection. Such listing shall also designate the registration
38 number of the motor vehicle on which authorized flashing blue lights
39 are to be used.

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

49 commissioner, the names and addresses of members who have been
50 authorized to use flashing green lights as provided in this subsection.
51 Such listing shall also designate the registration number of the vehicle
52 on which the authorized flashing green lights are to be used.

53 (e) The commissioner may issue a permit for a red light or lights,
54 including flashing red lights, but not including a steady red
55 illuminated light visible from the front of a vehicle, which may be used
56 on a motor vehicle or equipment (1) used by paid fire chiefs and their
57 deputies and assistants, up to a total of five individuals per
58 department, (2) used by volunteer fire chiefs and their deputies and
59 assistants, up to a total of five individuals per department, (3) used by
60 members of the fire police on a stationary vehicle as a warning signal
61 during traffic directing operations at the scene of a fire or emergency,
62 (4) used by chief executive officers of emergency medical service
63 organizations, as defined in section 19a-175, the first or second
64 deputies, or if there are no deputies, the first or second assistants, of
65 such an organization that is a municipal or volunteer or licensed
66 organization, (5) used by local fire marshals, or (6) used by directors of
67 emergency management.

68 (f) The commissioner may issue a permit for a yellow or amber light
69 or lights, including flashing yellow or amber lights, which may be
70 used on motor vehicles or equipment that are (1) specified in
71 subsection (e) of this section, (2) maintenance vehicles as defined in
72 section 14-1, or (3) vehicles transporting or escorting any vehicle or
73 load or combinations thereof, which is or are either oversize or
74 overweight, or both, and being operated or traveling under a permit
75 issued by the Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to section 14-
76 270. A yellow or amber light or lights, including flashing yellow or
77 amber lights, may be used without obtaining a permit from the
78 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles on wreckers registered pursuant to
79 section 14-66, on vehicles of carriers in rural mail delivery service or on
80 vehicles operated by construction inspectors employed by the state of
81 Connecticut, authorized by the Commissioner of Transportation, used

82 during the performance of inspections on behalf of the state. The
83 Commissioner of Transportation shall maintain a list of such
84 authorized construction inspectors, including the name and address of
85 each inspector and the registration number for each vehicle on which
86 the lights are to be used.

87 (g) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may issue a permit for a
88 white light or lights, including flashing white lights, which may be
89 used on a motor vehicle or equipment as specified in subdivision (1),
90 (2), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (e) of this section. A vehicle being
91 operated by a member of a volunteer fire department or company or a
92 volunteer emergency medical technician may use flashing white head
93 lamps, provided such member or emergency medical technician is on
94 the way to the scene of a fire or medical emergency and has received
95 written authorization from the chief law enforcement officer of the
96 municipality to use such head lamps. Such head lamps shall only be
97 used within the municipality granting such authorization or from a
98 personal residence or place of employment, if located in an adjoining
99 municipality. Such authorization may be revoked for use of such head
100 lamps in violation of this subdivision. For the purposes of this
101 subsection, the term "flashing white lights" shall not include the
102 simultaneous flashing of head lamps.

103 (h) The commissioner may issue a permit for emergency vehicles, as
104 defined in subsection (a) of section 14-283, to use a blue, red, yellow, or
105 white light or lights, including flashing lights or any combination
106 thereof, except that the commissioner may only issue a permit for a
107 steady blue or red illuminated light visible from the front of a vehicle
108 for a state or local police vehicle operated by a police officer.

109 (i) The commissioner may issue a permit for ambulances, as defined
110 in section 19a-175, which may, in addition to the flashing lights
111 allowed in subsection (h) of this section, use flashing lights of other
112 colors specified by federal requirements for the manufacture of an
113 ambulance. If the commissioner issues a permit for any ambulance,

114 such permit shall be issued at the time of registration and upon each
115 renewal of such registration.

116 (j) Use of colored and flashing lights except as authorized by this
117 section shall be an infraction.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2019	14-96q

Statement of Purpose:

To limit the use of red and blue steady illuminated lights visible from the front of a vehicle to vehicles operated by police officers.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

Co-Sponsors: REP. MCGORTY, 122nd Dist.; REP. CAMILLO, 151st Dist.

H.B. 5658