WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §17C-12-7

§17C-12-7. Overtaking and passing school bus; penalties; signs and warning lights upon buses; requirements for sale of buses; mounting of cameras; educational information campaign; limitation on idling.

(a) The driver of a vehicle, upon meeting or overtaking from either direction any school bus which has stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging any school children, shall stop the vehicle before reaching the school bus when there is in operation on the school bus flashing warning signal lights, as referred to in §17C-12-8 of this code, and the driver may not proceed until the school bus resumes motion, or is signaled by the school bus driver to proceed or the visual signals are no longer actuated. This section applies wherever the school bus is receiving or discharging children including, but not limited to, any street, highway, parking lot, private road, or driveway: Provided, That the driver of a vehicle upon a controlled access highway need not stop upon meeting or passing a school bus which is on a different roadway or adjacent to the highway and where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

(b) Any driver acting in violation of subsection (a) of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction for a first offense, shall be fined not less than $500 or more than $1,000, or confined in jail not more than six months, or both fined and confined. Upon conviction of a second violation of subsection (a) of this section, the driver shall be fined not less than $1,000 nor more than $1,500, or confined in jail not more than six months, or both fined and confined. Upon conviction of a third or subsequent violation of subsection (a) of this section, the driver shall be fined $2,000 and confined not less than 48 hours in jail but not more than six months.

(c) Where the actual identity of the operator of a motor vehicle operated in violation of subsection (a) of this section is unknown but the license plate number of the motor vehicle is known, it may be inferred that the operator was an owner or lessee of the motor vehicle for purposes of the probable cause determination. Where there is more than one registered owner or lessee, the inference created by this subsection shall apply to the first listed owner or lessee as found on the motor vehicle registration: Provided, That a person charged with a violation of subsection (a) of this section, under the provisions of this subsection, where the sole evidence against the owner or lessee is the presence of the vehicle at the scene at the time of the offense shall only be subject to the applicable fine set forth in subsection (b) of this section upon conviction: Provided, however, That the offenses set forth in subsections (f) and (g) of this section are separate and distinct from that set forth in subsection (a) of this section.

(d) Service of process of a complaint issued pursuant to subsection (c) of this section shall be effected consistent with West Virginia Rule of Criminal Procedure 4.

(e) In addition to the penalties prescribed in subsection (b) of this section, the Commissioner

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of Motor Vehicles shall, upon conviction, suspend the driver's license of the person so convicted:

(1) Of a first offense under subsection (b) of this section, for a period of 60 days;

(2) Of a second offense under subsection (b) of this section, for a period of 180 days; or

(3) Of a third or subsequent offense under subsection (b) of this section, for a period of one year.

(f) Any driver of a vehicle who willfully violates the provisions of subsection (a) of this section and the violation causes serious bodily injury to any person other than the driver, is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, shall be confined in a state correctional facility not less than one year nor more than three years and fined not less than $2,000 nor more than $5,000.

(g) Any driver of a vehicle who willfully violates the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, and the violation causes death, is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, shall be confined in a state correctional facility not less than one year nor more than 10 years and fined not less than $5,000 nor more than $10,000.

(h) Every bus used for the transportation of school children shall bear upon the front and rear of the bus a plainly visible sign containing the words "school bus" in letters not less than eight inches in height. When a contract school bus is being operated upon a highway for purposes other than the actual transportation of children either to or from school, all markings on the contract school bus indicating "school bus" shall be covered or concealed. Any school bus sold or transferred to another owner by a county board of education, agency or individual shall have all flashing warning lights disconnected and all lettering removed or permanently obscured, except when sold or transferred for the transportation of school children: Provided, That every county board of education shall install forward-facing and rear-facing cameras on all school buses purchased on or after July 1, 2019, for the purpose of enforcing this section and for any other lawful purpose.

(i) To the extent that state, federal, or other funds are available, the State Police shall conduct an information campaign to educate drivers concerning the provisions of this section and the importance of school bus safety.

(j) The State Board of Education shall promulgate a rule in accordance with the provisions of §29A-3B-1 et seq. of this code governing the idling of school buses.

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