

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 834 (Senator Young)
Judicial Proceedings

Vehicle Laws - Rules of the Road - Authorized Turns on Red After Yielding

This bill authorizes a driver of a motor vehicle facing a steady red signal to cautiously enter the intersection and, instead of stopping, make a right turn after yielding to any traffic coming from the left. It also authorizes the driver of a motor vehicle on a one-way street facing a steady red signal to cautiously enter the intersection and, instead of stopping, make a left turn onto a one-way street after yielding to any traffic coming from the right.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal reduction in general fund revenues due to fewer citations for illegal turns issued under the bill. No impact on expenditures as enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: Enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Vehicular traffic facing a steady red signal or a steady red arrow must stop at the near side of the intersection at a clearly marked stop line. If there is no stop line, traffic must stop before entering any crosswalk. If there is no crosswalk, traffic must stop before entering the intersection. Traffic must remain stopped until a signal to proceed is displayed. This provision also applies to a traffic control signal placed at a location other than an intersection. The required stop must be made at a sign or marking on the pavement indicating where the stop must be made, or at the signal, if there is no sign or marking.

Unless a sign prohibiting a turn is in place, vehicular traffic facing a steady red signal, after stopping as required, may cautiously enter the intersection and make a right turn or make a left turn from a one-way street onto a one-way street. Vehicular traffic must yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian or bicycle lawfully within an adjacent crosswalk. The right-of-way must also be yielded to any vehicle in the intersection or approaching on another roadway so closely as to constitute an immediate hazard.

A violation of any of the above provisions is a misdemeanor with a maximum fine of \$500. The District Court has established a prepayment penalty of \$90 for violations of any of the above provisions. The prepayment penalty increases to \$130 if the violation contributes to an accident. The Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) must also assess two points against the driver’s license of any driver who fails to stop at a steady red signal before making a left or right turn, as specified. MVA must assess one point against the license of a driver who fails to yield the right-of-way at an intersection to a pedestrian, vehicle, or bicycle after making a turn on a steady red signal. If the violation of any of the above provisions contributes to an accident, MVA must assess three points against the driver’s license.

The Maryland Vehicle Law requires the driver of a vehicle to come to a stop when a pedestrian is crossing in a crosswalk and is on the half of the roadway on which the vehicle is traveling or when the pedestrian in a crosswalk is approaching from an adjacent lane on the other half of the roadway. A violation is a misdemeanor with a maximum fine of \$500. The prepayment penalty established by the District Court is \$80 and one point must be assessed against the driver’s license by MVA. However, if the violation contributes to an accident, the fine may not be prepaid; the violator must appear in court to answer the charge.

Background: Exhibit 1 shows the citations filed in the District Court relating to red signals, turns, and rights-of-way for fiscal 2013.

Exhibit 1
Citations – Turns and Right-of-way on Red Signal
Fiscal 2013

<u>Violation</u>	<u>Open</u>	<u>Prepaid</u>	<u>Trial</u>	<u>Total</u>
Failure to Stop at Red Signal Before Right Turn	184	873	801	1,858
Failure to Stop at Red Signal Before Left Turn	46	168	141	355
Failure to Stop at Red Signal Before Other Turn	6	18	24	48
Failure to Yield to Pedestrian/Vehicle After Turn	6	50	50	106
Failure to Stop for Pedestrian in Crosswalk	105	770	477	1,352

Source: District Court of Maryland

State Revenues: General fund revenues decrease minimally from the narrower applicability of this offense under the bill.

As noted above, the prepayment penalty for illegal turns when facing a red signal is \$90. This estimate is based only on citations that are prepaid as there is insufficient data to determine the fines assessed for those citations that are disposed of at a trial. In fiscal 2013, 873 citations were prepaid for failing to stop at a red signal before a right turn, and 168 citations were prepaid for failing to stop at a red signal before a left turn. *For illustrative purposes only*, if 1,041 fewer citations were issued under this bill for illegal turns when facing a red signal, then general fund revenues would be reduced by \$70,268 in fiscal 2015 and \$93,690 on an annual basis.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1125 (Delegate Parrott, *et al.*) - Environmental Matters.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of State Police, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 23, 2014
mc/ljm

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