

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

EXTRA SESSION 1994

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HOUSE BILL 225  
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/3/94

Short Title: MV Window Glazing.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 15, 1994

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO BRING THE NORTH CAROLINA STATUTES ON MOTOR VEHICLE  
3 WINDOW GLAZING INTO COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW AND  
4 REGULATIONS.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 Section 1. G.S. 20-127 reads as rewritten:

7 "**§ 20-127. Windshields must be unobstructed.**

8 (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to drive any vehicle upon a highway  
9 with any sign, poster or other nontransparent material upon the front windshield, side  
10 wings, side or rear window of such motor vehicle other than a certificate or other paper  
11 required to be so displayed by law, or approved by the Commissioner of Motor  
12 Vehicles.

13 (b) No motor vehicle which is equipped with a permanent windshield shall be  
14 operated upon the highways unless said windshield is equipped with a device for  
15 cleaning snow, rain, moisture, or other matters from the windshield directly in front of  
16 the operator, which device shall be in good working order and so constructed as to be  
17 controlled or operated by the operator of the vehicle. Provided, on any vehicle equipped  
18 by its manufacturer with such devices on both the right and left sides of windshield,  
19 both such devices shall be in working order. The device required by this subsection  
20 shall be of a type approved by the Commissioner.

21 (c) ~~The windshield, rear and side glasses of a motor vehicle must be free from~~  
22 ~~discoloration which impair the driver's vision or create a hazard.~~

1       (d)    ~~On or after January 1, 1989, it shall be unlawful to operate a motor vehicle~~  
2 ~~registered or which is required to be registered in this State under this Chapter, upon any~~  
3 ~~highway or public vehicular area with a windshield or a front side window to the~~  
4 ~~immediate right or left of the operator, or a rear window used for visibility, which has~~  
5 ~~been darkened, smoked, or tinted after factory delivery. Provided, however, after first~~  
6 ~~sale of the vehicle, a single application of tinted film which has been registered with and~~  
7 ~~approved by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall be lawful if the manufacturer's~~  
8 ~~label is implanted between the film and glass in the lower left section of each darkened~~  
9 ~~window and is legible from outside the vehicle. The label shall indicate the film~~  
10 ~~registration number, the name and address of the manufacturer and a certification of~~  
11 ~~compliance with North Carolina law. No film or darkening material may be applied on~~  
12 ~~the windshield except to replace the sunshield in the uppermost area as installed by the~~  
13 ~~manufacturer of the vehicle, in which case the label shall be implanted between the film~~  
14 ~~and glass in the upper left section of the windshield and be legible from outside the~~  
15 ~~vehicle. A rear window shall be required for visibility on every vehicle unless the~~  
16 ~~vehicle is equipped with an outside mirror of a type approved by the Commissioner~~  
17 ~~which eliminates the requirement for an inside rearview mirror under the provisions of~~  
18 ~~G.S. 20-126(a) and (b).~~

19       (e)    ~~No motor vehicle inspection certificate shall be issued on or after January 1,~~  
20 ~~1988, for a vehicle on which the windshield or front window to the immediate right and~~  
21 ~~left of the operator or the rear window if required for visibility, has been darkened by~~  
22 ~~the installation of tinted film or by other means, except as permitted under subsection~~  
23 ~~(d) of this section.~~

24       (f)    ~~Before shipping or making any tinted film available for installation on a~~  
25 ~~motor vehicle in this State, the manufacturer shall apply to the Commissioner for~~  
26 ~~approval and registration of its tinted film and for a label to be used in the identification~~  
27 ~~and certification of compliance with light transmittance and reflectance standards. The~~  
28 ~~Commissioner shall approve tinted film to be used in the front windows or a rear~~  
29 ~~window if required for visibility if the manufacturer demonstrates that it has at least~~  
30 ~~fifty percent (50%) light transmittance if it is to be used on front, side, or rear windows~~  
31 ~~and a luminous reflectance of not more than twenty percent (20%). A fee shall be paid~~  
32 ~~by the manufacturer with each application for film approval and registration in the~~  
33 ~~approximate amount of the cost to the Division in the review of the applications.~~

34       (g)    ~~With any delivery of tinted film for installation in vehicles, where approved~~  
35 ~~film is required, the manufacturer shall provide the required labels with written~~  
36 ~~instructions and materials for permanent installation. The use of any label that is not~~  
37 ~~registered, or the misuse of any registered label to mislead motor vehicle safety~~  
38 ~~inspectors, law enforcement officers, or other officials shall constitute a misdemeanor.~~

39       (h)    ~~Subsections (d) through (g) of this section shall apply only to darkened,~~  
40 ~~smoked, or tinted film installed on motor vehicle windows after factory delivery and~~  
41 ~~after July 1, 1988, and shall not apply to vehicles that are registered in another state, are~~  
42 ~~not required to be registered in this State, and were in compliance with the standards~~  
43 ~~required in the state of registration at the time of registration.~~

1       (i) ~~Subsections (d) through (g) of this section do not apply to law enforcement~~  
2 ~~K-9 vehicles and films used to darken windows on those units.~~

3       (c) On or after July 1, 1995, no person may operate a motor vehicle that is  
4 registered or required to be registered in this State on any public highway, road, or street  
5 that has a sunscreen device or tinted film applied or affixed on the windshield, the front  
6 side wings, the front side windows adjacent to the right and left of the driver, and  
7 windows to the rear of the operator, that do not meet the requirements of this section. If  
8 no after-factory installed sunscreen device or tinting film has been added to the  
9 windows as herein described, the provisions of this section regarding light transmittance  
10 and reflectivity do not apply.

11       (d) A sunscreen device or tinting film may be used only along the top of the  
12 windshield and may not extend downward beyond the ASI line or more than five  
13 inches, whichever is closer to the top of the windshield.

14       (e) Notwithstanding subsection (d) of this section, a sunscreen device or tinting  
15 film must be a nonreflective type and may not be red, yellow, or amber in color.

16       (f) No sunscreen device or tinting film may be applied or affixed to any window  
17 other than the windshield that reduces the total light transmission of such windows to  
18 less than thirty-five percent (35%).

19       (g) No sunscreen device or tinting film may be applied or affixed to any window  
20 of a motor vehicle that has a reflectance of light exceeding twenty percent (20%).

21       (h) No motor vehicle inspection certificate shall be issued on or after July 1,  
22 1995, for a motor vehicle that is not in compliance with the requirements of this section.  
23 No inspection sticker shall be issued for a motor vehicle with any after-factory installed  
24 sunscreen device or tinting film unless the window bears the installer's sticker as  
25 required by subsection (i) of this section.

26       (i) No person or firm may apply or affix to the windows of any motor vehicle  
27 registered or required to be registered in this State, a sunscreen device or tinting film  
28 that is not in compliance with the requirements of this section. The installer shall affix a  
29 sticker between the film and the glass in the lower back corner of each glass that is  
30 visible from the outside of the vehicle, no larger than one inch by two inches which  
31 certifies compliance with this section and identifies the installer by name and street  
32 address.

33       (j) The Commissioner shall approve equipment, methods, and procedures for  
34 measuring light transmission and reflectance of sunscreen devices and tinting films.  
35 Testimony that any window of a vehicle failed to meet the light transmittance or  
36 reflectance requirements of this section using equipment, methods, or procedures  
37 approved by the Commissioner shall be **prima facie** evidence of a violation of this  
38 section. It shall be a defense under subsections (f) or (g) of this section if the operator  
39 charged produces a certification issued by a licensed safety equipment inspection station  
40 showing that the sunscreen device or tinting film met the requirements of this section  
41 when measured using equipment, methods, or procedures approved by the  
42 Commissioner. It shall be a further defense to show that any sign, poster, or other  
43 nontransparent material, discoloration, sunscreen device, or tinting film has been  
44 removed or modified so that the vehicle is in compliance with this section.

1       (k) This section shall not apply to windows behind the driver of excursion  
2 passenger vehicles as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(27)a., for-hire passenger vehicles as  
3 defined in G.S. 20-4.01(27)b., common carriers of passengers as defined in G.S. 20-  
4 4.01(27)c., ambulances as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(27)f., property hauling vehicles as  
5 defined in G.S. 20-4.01(31), limousines, motor homes, or law enforcement K-9 vehicles  
6 or vehicles registered in another state and in compliance with the standards required in  
7 that state.

8       (l) A violation of subsections (h) and (i) of this section shall be a misdemeanor  
9 punishable as provided in G.S. 20-176(c). A violation of any other subsection of this  
10 section is an infraction. Any person violating subsections (f) or (g) of this section  
11 during the period of October 1, 1994, through December 31, 1994, shall be given a  
12 warning of the violation only."

13       Sec. 2. G.S. 20-183.3 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

14       "(c) No inspection certificate shall be issued by a safety equipment inspection  
15 station on or after July 1, 1995, for a motor vehicle that is not in compliance with G.S.  
16 20-127. In addition to the items listed in subsection (a) of this section, safety inspection  
17 equipment stations shall inspect the windshields, side wings, side or rear windows of all  
18 vehicles in accordance with methods and procedures approved by the Commissioner."

19       Sec. 3. This act becomes effective October 1, 1994, and shall apply to all  
20 vehicles newly registered on or after that date. Nothing in this act shall affect  
21 prosecutions or violations of this section committed on or before the effective date of  
22 this act.