

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

S

1

SENATE BILL 77

Short Title: Cities/Civilian Traffic Investigators. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Lowe (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

February 8, 2023

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT AUTHORIZING CITIES TO EMPLOY AND ALLOW CIVILIAN PERSONNEL TO  
3 INVESTIGATE TRAFFIC CRASHES INVOLVING ONLY PROPERTY DAMAGE.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** Article 21 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes is amended by  
6 adding a new section to read:

7 "**§ 160A-499.6. Civilian Traffic Investigators.**

8 (a) A city may employ and allow civilian personnel to investigate traffic crashes and issue  
9 citations for infractions under Chapter 20 of the General Statutes related to the traffic crashes  
10 investigated. The civilian personnel shall be known as "Civilian Traffic Investigators."

11 (b) All of the following shall apply to Civilian Traffic Investigators (hereinafter  
12 "Investigator" or "Investigators") employed by a city:

13 (1) The city shall establish the minimum standards for employment as an  
14 Investigator.

15 (2) Each Investigator shall attend a training program designed by the chief of  
16 police, or the chief's designee, or, if applicable, the sheriff of the county with  
17 which the city has contracted to provide law enforcement services, or the  
18 sheriff's designee, in consultation with the North Carolina Justice Academy.  
19 Upon completion of the training program, each Investigator shall spend not  
20 less than four weeks of field training with a law enforcement officer who has  
21 experience conducting traffic crash investigations.

22 (3) Each Investigator shall be issued credentials by the city identifying the  
23 individual as a Civilian Traffic Investigator. The Investigator shall produce  
24 official credentials at any time when requested by a member of the public  
25 involved in or a witness to a crash.

26 (4) Investigators shall be issued a uniform that is substantially different in color  
27 and style from that of a law enforcement officer for the city. The uniform shall  
28 have patches that clearly identify the individual as an Investigator, and the  
29 individual's name shall be clearly displayed on the uniform. Investigators shall  
30 not be issued badges.

31 (5) Any vehicles issued to, or used by, an Investigator shall not bear markings or  
32 symbols that identify the vehicle as a police vehicle. The vehicle may have  
33 emergency equipment and lights installed but shall not use blue lights in any  
34 manner or form. Red and amber lights are permissible.

35 (6) Investigators shall not be issued a weapon of any type.

36 (7) Investigators shall have no authority to arrest or issue criminal process.



- 1           (8) Investigators shall investigate crashes involving only property damage.
- 2           Investigators shall comply with all provisions of G.S. 20-166.1. A report
- 3           completed by an Investigator shall be treated the same as if it were completed
- 4           by a law enforcement officer for purposes of G.S. 20-166.1(i). A law
- 5           enforcement officer shall investigate any crash involving personal injury or a
- 6           fatality.
- 7           (9) Investigators shall have the same authority as a law enforcement officer to tow
- 8           or remove a vehicle that is obstructing a public street or highway."

9           **SECTION 2.** Not later than December 31, 2024, each city that employs Civilian  
10 Traffic Investigators, as authorized by Section 1 of this act, shall submit to the House of  
11 Representatives Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety and the Senate  
12 Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety a written report on the training and use  
13 of Civilian Traffic Investigators for the period commencing on the effective date of this act and  
14 concluding November 1, 2024.

15           **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.