

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

SESSION LAW 2021-179
HOUSE BILL 814

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE OPERATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD OCCUPANTLESS
VEHICLES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 20-4.01 reads as rewritten:

"§ 20-4.01. Definitions.

Unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions apply throughout this Chapter to the defined words and phrases and their cognates:

- ...
- (23a) Neighborhood occupantless vehicle. – A low-speed vehicle that is also a fully autonomous vehicle, designed to be operated without an occupant and used to transport cargo. A fully autonomous vehicle is defined in G.S. 20-400.
- ~~(23a)~~(23b) Nonfunctional airbag. – A replacement airbag that meets any of the following criteria:

...."

SECTION 2. Article 3 of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 20-121.2. Operation of a neighborhood occupantless vehicle on certain roadways; regulations; equipment requirements.

(a) Authorization. – A neighborhood occupantless vehicle may operate on streets and highways with the following restrictions:

- (1) A neighborhood occupantless vehicle may be operated only on streets and highways where the posted speed limit is 45 miles per hour or less.
- (2) A neighborhood occupantless vehicle must be operated in the right-hand travel lane or as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the street or highway, except when preparing for a left turn.
- (3) On a highway with two travel lanes, a neighborhood occupantless vehicle must turn off the roadway to a controlled stop as soon as practicable and when it is safe to do so to allow faster moving vehicles to pass when passing is unsafe because of traffic in the opposite direction or other conditions and there are five or more vehicles immediately behind the neighborhood occupantless vehicle.

(b) Equipment Exemptions. – A fully autonomous vehicle that is designed to be operated exclusively and at all times by an automated driving system shall not be subject to any State law or regulation requiring the installation, maintenance, or inspection of vehicle equipment that relates to or supports motor vehicle operation by a human driver, but is not necessary for operation by an automated driving system alone. "Automated driving system" is defined in G.S. 20-400."



SECTION 3. This act becomes effective December 1, 2021.
In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 4th day of November,
2021.

s/ Ralph Hise
Presiding Officer of the Senate

s/ Tim Moore
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Roy Cooper
Governor

Approved 3:16 p.m. this 10th day of November, 2021