



LEGAL UPDATE

AN ACT TO REDUCE TRAFFIC FATALITIES

On January 2, 2023 the Governor signed an Act to Reduce Traffic Fatalities. The act was covered in the 2024 Legal Update in-service training. One provision of the act goes into effect on January 1, 2025. This provision makes changes to paragraphs five and six of MGL c 90 § 7 which governs brakes, braking systems, mufflers, horns, lights, audible warning systems, and other equipment.

Below is the language of paragraphs five and six. All changes are **bolded**. **Red bolded** language has been deleted from the statute. **Green bolded** language has been added to the statute.

A motor vehicle, trailer, semi-trailer or semi-trailer unit classified as a class 3 or above by the Federal Highway Administration, with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,001 pounds or more, that is leased or purchased by the commonwealth on or after January 1, **2023 2025 or operated under a contract with the commonwealth on or after January 1, 2025**, shall be equipped with a lateral protective device, convex mirrors, crossover mirrors and backup cameras. This paragraph shall not apply to an ambulance, firefighting apparatus, low-speed vehicle, agricultural tractor or any other class or type of vehicle as determined by the registrar. The registrar shall adopt regulations establishing standards, consistent with the United States Department of Transportation John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center's side guard standard DOT-VNTSC-OSTR-16-05, and specifications for the size, design and mounting of lateral protective devices, convex mirrors and crossover mirrors. The registrar may provide alternative means of compliance with the convex mirror, crossover mirror and lateral protective device requirements. **A contractor's failure to comply with this paragraph may be grounds for termination of the contract and may be punishable by a fine of not more than \$500 for the first offense and not more than \$1,000 for a second or subsequent offense.**

The registrar shall prohibit: (i) visual obstructions due to aftermarket modifications and accessories that reduce the ability of the vehicle operator to directly see vulnerable users in the vicinity of the vehicle, including, but not limited to, bug deflectors and chrome visors; and (ii) aftermarket modifications and accessories, **including, but not limited to, bull bars**, that increase fatality and serious injury risk to vulnerable users in a collision with the vehicle, **including, but not limited to, bull bars**. The registrar shall promulgate regulations **enforcing implementing** this paragraph.

For specific guidance on the application of this case or any law, please consult your supervisor or your department's legal advisor.