

**2024 -- H 7631 AS AMENDED**

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LC005086  
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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024**

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES

Introduced By: Representatives Serpa, and Noret

Date Introduced: February 15, 2024

Referred To: House Judiciary

(Attorney General)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Sections 31-27-2 and 31-27-2.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-27 entitled  
2 "Motor Vehicle Offenses" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **31-27-2. Driving under influence of liquor or drugs.**

4           (a) Whoever drives or otherwise operates any vehicle in the state while under the influence  
5 of any intoxicating liquor, drugs, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of  
6 title 21, or any combination of these, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, except as provided in  
7 subsection (d)(3), and shall be punished as provided in subsection (d) of this section.

8           (b)(1) Any person charged under subsection (a), whose blood alcohol concentration is eight  
9 one-hundredths of one percent (.08%) or more by weight, as shown by a chemical analysis of a  
10 blood, breath, or urine sample, shall be guilty of violating subsection (a). This provision shall not  
11 preclude a conviction based on other admissible evidence, including the testimony of a drug  
12 recognition expert or evaluator, certified pursuant to training approved by the Rhode Island  
13 department of transportation office on highway safety. Proof of guilt under this section may also  
14 be based on evidence that the person charged was under the influence of intoxicating liquor, drugs,  
15 toluene, or any controlled substance defined in chapter 28 of title 21, or any combination of these,  
16 to a degree that rendered the person incapable of safely operating a vehicle. The fact that any person  
17 charged with violating this section is, or has been, legally entitled to use alcohol or a drug shall not  
18 constitute a defense against any charge of violating this section.

19           (2) [Deleted by P.L. 2021, ch. 170, § 1 and P.L. 2021, ch. 171, § 1.]

1 (c) In any criminal prosecution for a violation of subsection (a), evidence as to the amount  
2 of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of title 21, or  
3 any combination of these, in the defendant's blood at the time alleged as shown by a chemical  
4 analysis of the defendant's breath, blood, saliva or urine or other bodily substance, shall be  
5 admissible and competent, provided that evidence is presented that the following conditions have  
6 been complied with:

7 (1) The defendant has consented to the taking of the test upon which the analysis is made.  
8 Evidence that the defendant had refused to submit to the test shall not be admissible unless the  
9 defendant elects to testify.

10 (2) A true copy of the report of the test result was hand delivered at the location of the test  
11 or mailed within seventy-two (72) hours of the taking of the test to the person submitting to a breath  
12 test.

13 (3) Any person submitting to a chemical test of blood, urine, saliva or other body fluids  
14 shall have a true copy of the report of the test result mailed to him or her within thirty (30) days  
15 following the taking of the test.

16 (4) The test was performed according to methods and with equipment approved by the  
17 director of the department of health of the state of Rhode Island and by an authorized individual.

18 (5) Equipment used for the conduct of the tests by means of breath analysis had been tested  
19 for accuracy within thirty (30) days preceding the test by personnel qualified as hereinbefore  
20 provided, and breathalyzer operators shall be qualified and certified by the department of health  
21 within three hundred sixty-five (365) days of the test.

22 (6) The person arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the  
23 influence of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of  
24 title 21 or any combination of these in violation of subsection (a), was afforded the opportunity to  
25 have an additional chemical test. The officer arresting or so charging the person shall have informed  
26 the person of this right and afforded him or her a reasonable opportunity to exercise this right, and  
27 a notation to this effect is made in the official records of the case in the police department. Refusal  
28 to permit an additional chemical test shall render incompetent and inadmissible in evidence the  
29 original report.

30 (d)(1)(i) Every person found to have violated subsection (b)(1) shall be sentenced as  
31 follows: for a first violation whose blood alcohol concentration is eight one-hundredths of one  
32 percent (.08%), but less than one-tenth of one percent (.1%), by weight, or who has a blood presence  
33 of any scheduled controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of title 21, shall be subject to a fine  
34 of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100), nor more than three hundred dollars (\$300); shall be

1 required to perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of public community restitution, and/or shall be  
2 imprisoned for up to one year. The sentence may be served in any unit of the adult correctional  
3 institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge and/or shall be required to attend a special  
4 course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance; provided,  
5 however, that the court may permit a servicemember or veteran to complete any court-approved  
6 counseling program administered or approved by the Veterans' Administration, and his or her  
7 driver's license shall be suspended for thirty (30) days up to one hundred eighty (180) days. The  
8 sentencing judge or magistrate may prohibit that person from operating a motor vehicle, pursuant  
9 to subsection (d)(9) or (d)(10) of this section, that is not equipped with an ignition interlock system  
10 and/or blood and urine testing as provided in § 31-27-2.8.

11 (ii) Every person convicted of a first violation whose blood alcohol concentration is one-  
12 tenth of one percent (.1%) by weight or above, but less than fifteen hundredths of one percent  
13 (.15%), or whose blood alcohol concentration is unknown, shall be subject to a fine of not less than  
14 one hundred (\$100) dollars, nor more than four hundred dollars (\$400), and shall be required to  
15 perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of public community restitution and/or shall be imprisoned for  
16 up to one year. The sentence may be served in any unit of the adult correctional institutions in the  
17 discretion of the sentencing judge. The person's driving license shall be suspended for a period of  
18 three (3) months to twelve (12) months. The sentencing judge shall require attendance at a special  
19 course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance and/or  
20 alcoholic or drug treatment for the individual; provided, however, that the court may permit a  
21 servicemember or veteran to complete any court-approved counseling program administered or  
22 approved by the Veterans' Administration. The sentencing judge or magistrate may prohibit that  
23 person from operating a motor vehicle that is not equipped with an ignition interlock system as  
24 provided in § 31-27-2.8.

25 (iii) Every person convicted of a first offense whose blood alcohol concentration is fifteen  
26 hundredths of one percent (.15%) or above, or who is under the influence of a drug, toluene, or any  
27 controlled substance as defined in subsection (b)(1), shall be subject to a fine of five hundred dollars  
28 (\$500) and shall be required to perform twenty (20) to sixty (60) hours of public community  
29 restitution and/or shall be imprisoned for up to one year. The sentence may be served in any unit  
30 of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge. The person's driving  
31 license shall be suspended for a period of three (3) months to eighteen (18) months. The sentencing  
32 judge shall require attendance at a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence  
33 of a controlled substance and/or alcohol or drug treatment for the individual; provided, however,  
34 that the court may permit a servicemember or veteran to complete any court-approved counseling

1 program administered or approved by the Veterans' Administration. The sentencing judge or  
2 magistrate shall prohibit that person from operating a motor vehicle, pursuant to subsection (d)(9)  
3 or (d)(10) of this section, that is not equipped with an ignition interlock system and/or blood and  
4 urine testing as provided in § 31-27-2.8.

5 (2)(i) Every person convicted of a second violation within a ~~five-year (5)~~ ten-year (10)  
6 period with a blood alcohol concentration of eight one-hundredths of one percent (.08%) or above,  
7 but less than fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%), or whose blood alcohol concentration is  
8 unknown, or who has a blood presence of any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of title  
9 21, and every person convicted of a second violation within a ~~five-year (5)~~ ten-year (10) period,  
10 regardless of whether the prior violation and subsequent conviction was a violation and subsequent  
11 conviction under this statute or under the driving under the influence of liquor or drugs statute of  
12 any other state, shall be subject to a mandatory fine of four hundred dollars (\$400). The person's  
13 driving license shall be suspended for a period of one year to two (2) years, and the individual shall  
14 be sentenced to not less than ten (10) days, nor more than one year, in jail. The sentence may be  
15 served in any unit of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge;  
16 however, not less than forty-eight (48) hours of imprisonment shall be served consecutively. The  
17 sentencing judge shall require alcohol or drug treatment for the individual; provided, however, that  
18 the court may permit a servicemember or veteran to complete any court-approved counseling  
19 program administered or approved by the Veterans' Administration and shall prohibit that person  
20 from operating a motor vehicle, pursuant to subsection (d)(9) or (d)(10) of this section, that is not  
21 equipped with an ignition interlock system and/or blood and urine testing as provided in § 31-27-  
22 2.8.

23 (ii) Every person convicted of a second violation within a ~~five-year (5)~~ ten-year (10) period  
24 whose blood alcohol concentration is fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) or above, by weight  
25 as shown by a chemical analysis of a blood, breath, or urine sample, or who is under the influence  
26 of a drug, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in subsection (b)(1), shall be subject to  
27 mandatory imprisonment of not less than six (6) months, nor more than one year; a mandatory fine  
28 of not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000); and a mandatory license suspension for a period of  
29 two (2) years from the date of completion of the sentence imposed under this subsection. The  
30 sentencing judge shall require alcohol or drug treatment for the individual; provided, however, that  
31 the court may permit a servicemember or veteran to complete any court approved counseling  
32 program administered or approved by the Veterans' Administration. The sentencing judge or  
33 magistrate shall prohibit that person from operating a motor vehicle, pursuant to subsection (d)(9)  
34 or (d)(10) of this section, that is not equipped with an ignition interlock system and/or blood and

1 urine testing as provided in § 31-27-2.8.

2 (3)(i) Every person convicted of a third or subsequent violation within a ~~five-year (5)~~ ten-  
3 year (10) period with a blood alcohol concentration of eight one-hundredths of one percent (.08%)  
4 or above, but less than fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%), or whose blood alcohol  
5 concentration is unknown or who has a blood presence of any scheduled controlled substance as  
6 defined in chapter 28 of title 21, regardless of whether any prior violation and subsequent  
7 conviction was a violation and subsequent conviction under this statute or under the driving under  
8 the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state, shall be guilty of a felony and be subject  
9 to a mandatory fine of four hundred (\$400) dollars. The person's driving license shall be suspended  
10 for a period of two (2) years to three (3) years, and the individual shall be sentenced to not less than  
11 one year and not more than three (3) years in jail. The sentence may be served in any unit of the  
12 adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge; however, not less than forty-  
13 eight (48) hours of imprisonment shall be served consecutively. The sentencing judge shall require  
14 alcohol or drug treatment for the individual; provided, however, that the court may permit a  
15 servicemember or veteran to complete any court-approved counseling program administered or  
16 approved by the Veterans' Administration, and shall prohibit that person from operating a motor  
17 vehicle, pursuant to subsection (d)(9) or (d)(10) of this section, that is not equipped with an ignition  
18 interlock system and/or blood and urine testing as provided in § 31-27-2.8.

19 (ii) Every person convicted of a third or subsequent violation within a ten-year (10) period  
20 whose blood alcohol concentration is fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) above by weight as  
21 shown by a chemical analysis of a blood, breath, or urine sample, or who is under the influence of  
22 a drug, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in subsection (b)(1), shall be subject to  
23 mandatory imprisonment of not less than three (3) years, nor more than five (5) years; a mandatory  
24 fine of not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), nor more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000);  
25 and a mandatory license suspension for a period of three (3) years from the date of completion of  
26 the sentence imposed under this subsection. The sentencing judge shall require alcohol or drug  
27 treatment for the individual. The sentencing judge or magistrate shall prohibit that person from  
28 operating a motor vehicle, pursuant to subsection (d)(9) or (d)(10) of this section, that is not  
29 equipped with an ignition interlock system and/or blood and urine testing as provided in § 31-27-  
30 2.8.

31 (iii) In addition to the foregoing penalties, every person convicted of a third or subsequent  
32 violation within a ~~five-year (5)~~ ten-year (10) period, regardless of whether any prior violation and  
33 subsequent conviction was a violation and subsequent conviction under this statute or under the  
34 driving under the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state, shall be subject, in the

1 discretion of the sentencing judge, to having the vehicle owned and operated by the violator seized  
2 and sold by the state of Rhode Island, with all funds obtained by the sale to be transferred to the  
3 general fund.

4 (4) Whoever drives or otherwise operates any vehicle in the state while under the influence  
5 of any intoxicating liquor, drugs, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of  
6 title 21, or any combination of these, when his or her license to operate is suspended, revoked, or  
7 cancelled for operating under the influence of a narcotic drug or intoxicating liquor, shall be guilty  
8 of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than three (3) years and by a fine of not more  
9 than three thousand dollars (\$3,000). The court shall require alcohol and/or drug treatment for the  
10 individual; provided, the penalties provided for in this subsection (d)(4) shall not apply to an  
11 individual who has surrendered his or her license and served the court-ordered period of suspension,  
12 but who, for any reason, has not had his or her license reinstated after the period of suspension,  
13 revocation, or suspension has expired; provided, further, the individual shall be subject to the  
14 provisions of subsection (d)(2)(i), (d)(2)(ii), (d)(3)(i), (d)(3)(ii), or (d)(3)(iii) regarding subsequent  
15 offenses, and any other applicable provision of this section.

16 (5)(i) For purposes of determining the period of license suspension, a prior violation shall  
17 constitute any charge brought and sustained under the provisions of this section or § 31-27-2.1.

18 (ii) Any person over the age of eighteen (18) who is convicted under this section for  
19 operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, other drugs, or a combination of  
20 these, while a child under the age of thirteen (13) years was present as a passenger in the motor  
21 vehicle when the offense was committed shall be subject to immediate license suspension pending  
22 prosecution. Any person convicted of violating this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor for a  
23 first offense and may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not more than one year and a fine  
24 not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000). Any person convicted of a second or subsequent  
25 offense shall be guilty of a felony offense and may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not  
26 more than five (5) years and a fine not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000). The sentencing  
27 judge shall also order a license suspension of up to two (2) years, require attendance at a special  
28 course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance, and alcohol  
29 or drug education and/or treatment. The individual may also be required to pay a highway  
30 assessment fee of no more than five hundred dollars (\$500) and the assessment shall be deposited  
31 in the general fund.

32 (6)(i) Any person convicted of a violation under this section shall pay a highway  
33 assessment fine of five hundred dollars (\$500) that shall be deposited into the general fund. The  
34 assessment provided for by this subsection shall be collected from a violator before any other fines

1 authorized by this section.

2 (ii) Any person convicted of a violation under this section shall be assessed a fee of eighty-  
3 six dollars (\$86).

4 (7)(i) If the person convicted of violating this section is under the age of eighteen (18)  
5 years, for the first violation he or she shall be required to perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of  
6 public community restitution and the juvenile's driving license shall be suspended for a period of  
7 six (6) months, and may be suspended for a period up to eighteen (18) months. The sentencing  
8 judge shall also require attendance at a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the  
9 influence of a controlled substance and alcohol or drug education and/or treatment for the juvenile.  
10 The juvenile may also be required to pay a highway assessment fine of no more than five hundred  
11 dollars (\$500) and the assessment imposed shall be deposited into the general fund.

12 (ii) If the person convicted of violating this section is under the age of eighteen (18) years,  
13 for a second or subsequent violation regardless of whether any prior violation and subsequent  
14 conviction was a violation and subsequent conviction under this statute or under the driving under  
15 the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state, he or she shall be subject to a mandatory  
16 suspension of his or her driving license until such time as he or she is twenty-one (21) years of age  
17 and may, in the discretion of the sentencing judge, also be sentenced to the Rhode Island training  
18 school for a period of not more than one year and/or a fine of not more than five hundred dollars  
19 (\$500).

20 (8) Any person convicted of a violation under this section may undergo a clinical  
21 assessment at the community college of Rhode Island's center for workforce and community  
22 education. Should this clinical assessment determine problems of alcohol, drug abuse, or  
23 psychological problems associated with alcoholic or drug abuse, this person shall be referred to an  
24 appropriate facility, licensed or approved by the department of behavioral healthcare,  
25 developmental disabilities and hospitals, for treatment placement, case management, and  
26 monitoring. In the case of a servicemember or veteran, the court may order that the person be  
27 evaluated through the Veterans' Administration. Should the clinical assessment determine  
28 problems of alcohol, drug abuse, or psychological problems associated with alcohol or drug abuse,  
29 the person may have their treatment, case management, and monitoring administered or approved  
30 by the Veterans' Administration.

31 (9) Notwithstanding any other sentencing and disposition provisions contained in this  
32 chapter, if the judge or magistrate makes a finding beyond a reasonable doubt that a motorist was  
33 operating a vehicle in the state while under the influence of drugs, toluene, or any controlled  
34 substance as evidenced by the presence of controlled substances on or about the person or vehicle,

1 or other reliable indicia or articulable conditions thereof, but not intoxicating liquor based on a  
2 preliminary breath test, results from a breathalyzer that indicates no blood alcohol concentration,  
3 or both, the judge or magistrate may exercise his or her discretion and eliminate the requirement of  
4 an ignition interlock system; provided, that blood and/or urine testing is mandated as a condition  
5 to operating a motor vehicle as provided in § 31-27-2.8.

6 (10) Notwithstanding any other sentencing and disposition provisions contained in this  
7 chapter, if the judge or magistrate makes a finding beyond a reasonable doubt that a motorist was  
8 operating a vehicle in the state while under the influence of drugs, toluene, or any controlled  
9 substance as evidenced by the presence of controlled substances on or about the person or vehicle,  
10 or other reliable indicia or articulable conditions thereof and intoxicating liquor based on a  
11 preliminary breath test, results from a breathalyzer that indicates blood alcohol concentration, or  
12 both, the judge or magistrate may require an ignition interlock system in addition to blood and/or  
13 urine testing as a condition to operating a motor vehicle as provided in § 31-27-2.8.

14 (e) Percent by weight of alcohol in the blood shall be based upon milligrams of alcohol per  
15 one hundred cubic centimeters (100 cc) of blood.

16 (f)(1) There is established an alcohol and drug safety unit within the division of motor  
17 vehicles to administer an alcohol safety action program. The program shall provide for placement  
18 and follow-up for persons who are required to pay the highway safety assessment. The alcohol and  
19 drug safety action program will be administered in conjunction with alcohol and drug programs  
20 licensed by the department of behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals.

21 (2) Persons convicted under the provisions of this chapter shall be required to attend a  
22 special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance, and/or  
23 participate in an alcohol or drug treatment program, which course and programs must meet the  
24 standards established by the Rhode Island department of behavioral healthcare, developmental  
25 disabilities and hospitals; provided, however, that the court may permit a servicemember or veteran  
26 to complete any court-approved counseling program administered or approved by the Veterans'  
27 Administration. The course shall take into consideration any language barrier that may exist as to  
28 any person ordered to attend, and shall provide for instruction reasonably calculated to  
29 communicate the purposes of the course in accordance with the requirements of the subsection.  
30 Any costs reasonably incurred in connection with the provision of this accommodation shall be  
31 borne by the person being retrained. A copy of any violation under this section shall be forwarded  
32 by the court to the alcohol and drug safety unit. In the event that persons convicted under the  
33 provisions of this chapter fail to attend and complete the above course or treatment program, as  
34 ordered by the judge, then the person may be brought before the court, and after a hearing as to



1 why the order of the court was not followed, may be sentenced to jail for a period not exceeding  
2 one year.

3 (3) The alcohol and drug safety action program within the division of motor vehicles shall  
4 be funded by general revenue appropriations.

5 (g) The director of the department of health is empowered to make and file with the  
6 secretary of state regulations that prescribe the techniques and methods of chemical analysis of the  
7 person's body fluids or breath and the qualifications and certification of individuals authorized to  
8 administer this testing and analysis.

9 (h) Jurisdiction for misdemeanor violations of this section shall be with the district court  
10 for persons eighteen (18) years of age or older and to the family court for persons under the age of  
11 eighteen (18) years. The courts shall have full authority to impose any sentence authorized and to  
12 order the suspension of any license for violations of this section. Trials in superior court are not  
13 required to be scheduled within thirty (30) days of the arraignment date.

14 (i) No fines, suspensions, assessments, alcohol or drug treatment programs, course on  
15 driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance, public community  
16 restitution, or jail provided for under this section can be suspended.

17 (j) An order to attend a special course on driving while intoxicated, that shall be  
18 administered in cooperation with a college or university accredited by the state, shall include a  
19 provision to pay a reasonable tuition for the course in an amount not less than twenty-five dollars  
20 (\$25.00), and a fee of one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175), which fee shall be deposited into  
21 the general fund.

22 (k) For the purposes of this section, any test of a sample of blood, breath, or urine for the  
23 presence of alcohol that relies in whole or in part upon the principle of infrared light absorption is  
24 considered a chemical test.

25 (l) If any provision of this section, or the application of any provision, shall for any reason  
26 be judged invalid, such a judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of the  
27 section, but shall be confined in this effect to the provision or application directly involved in the  
28 controversy giving rise to the judgment.

29 (m) For the purposes of this section, "servicemember" means a person who is presently  
30 serving in the armed forces of the United States, including the Coast Guard, a reserve component  
31 thereof, or the National Guard. "Veteran" means a person who has served in the armed forces,  
32 including the Coast Guard of the United States, a reserve component thereof, or the National Guard,  
33 and has been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

34 **31-27-2.1. Refusal to submit to chemical test.**

1           (a) Any person who operates a motor vehicle within this state shall be deemed to have  
2 given his or her consent to chemical tests of his or her breath, blood, saliva and/or urine for the  
3 purpose of determining the chemical content of his or her body fluids or breath. No more than two  
4 (2) complete tests, one for the presence of intoxicating liquor and one for the presence of toluene  
5 or any controlled substance, as defined in § 21-28-1.02, shall be administered at the direction of a  
6 law enforcement officer having reasonable grounds to believe the person to have been driving a  
7 motor vehicle within this state while under the influence of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any  
8 controlled substance, as defined in chapter 28 of title 21, or any combination of these. The director  
9 of the department of health is empowered to make and file, with the secretary of state, regulations  
10 that prescribe the techniques and methods of chemical analysis of the person's body fluids or breath  
11 and the qualifications and certification of individuals authorized to administer the testing and  
12 analysis.

13           (b) If a person, for religious or medical reasons, cannot be subjected to blood tests, the  
14 person may file an affidavit with the division of motor vehicles stating the reasons why he or she  
15 cannot be required to take blood tests and a notation to this effect shall be made on his or her  
16 license. If that person is asked to submit to chemical tests as provided under this chapter, the person  
17 shall only be required to submit to chemical tests of his or her breath, saliva or urine. When a person  
18 is requested to submit to blood tests, only a physician or registered nurse, or a medical technician  
19 certified under regulations promulgated by the director of the department of health, may withdraw  
20 blood for the purpose of determining the alcoholic content in it. This limitation shall not apply to  
21 the taking of breath, saliva or urine specimens. The person tested shall be permitted to have a  
22 physician of his or her own choosing, and at his or her own expense, administer chemical tests of  
23 his or her breath, blood, saliva and/or urine in addition to the tests administered at the direction of  
24 a law enforcement officer. If a person, having been placed under arrest, refuses upon the request of  
25 a law enforcement officer to submit to the tests, as provided in § 31-27-2, none shall be given.

26           (1) At the initial traffic tribunal appearance, the magistrate shall review the incident, action,  
27 and/or arrest reports submitted by the law enforcement officer to determine if there exists  
28 reasonable grounds to believe that the person had been driving a motor vehicle while under the  
29 influence of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of  
30 title 21, or any combination thereof. The magistrate shall also determine if the person had been  
31 informed of the penalties incurred as a result of failing to submit to a chemical test as provided in  
32 this section and that the person had been informed of the implied consent notice contained in  
33 subsection (c)(10) of this section. For the purpose of this subsection only, "driving a motor vehicle  
34 while under the influence of any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of title 21" shall be

1 indicated by the presence or aroma of a controlled substance on or about the person or vehicle of  
2 the individual refusing the chemical test or other reliable indicia or articulable conditions that the  
3 person was impaired due to their intake of a controlled substance.

4 (2) If the magistrate determines that subsection (b)(1) of this section has been satisfied they  
5 shall promptly order that the person's operator's license or privilege to operate a motor vehicle in  
6 this state be immediately suspended. Said suspension shall be subject to the hardship provisions  
7 enumerated in § 31-27-2.8.

8 (c) A traffic tribunal judge or magistrate, or a district court judge or magistrate, pursuant  
9 to the terms of subsection (d) of this section, shall order as follows:

10 (1) Impose, for the first violation, a fine in the amount of two hundred dollars (\$200) to  
11 five hundred dollars (\$500) and shall order the person to perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of  
12 public community restitution. The person's driving license in this state shall be suspended for a  
13 period of six (6) months to one year. The traffic tribunal judge or magistrate shall require attendance  
14 at a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance  
15 and/or alcohol or drug treatment for the individual. The traffic tribunal judge or magistrate may  
16 prohibit that person from operating a motor vehicle that is not equipped with an ignition interlock  
17 system and/or blood and urine testing as provided in § 31-27-2.8.

18 (2) Every person convicted of a second violation within a ~~five-year (5)~~ ten-year (10) period,  
19 except with respect to cases of refusal to submit to a blood test, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor;  
20 shall be imprisoned for not more than six (6) months; shall pay a fine in the amount of six hundred  
21 dollars (\$600) to one thousand dollars (\$1,000); perform sixty (60) to one hundred (100) hours of  
22 public community restitution; and the person's driving license in this state shall be suspended for  
23 a period of one year to two (2) years. The judge or magistrate shall require alcohol and/or drug  
24 treatment for the individual. The sentencing judge or magistrate shall prohibit that person from  
25 operating a motor vehicle that is not equipped with an ignition interlock system and/or blood and  
26 urine testing as provided in § 31-27-2.8.

27 (3) Every person convicted for a third or subsequent violation within a ~~five-year (5)~~ ten-  
28 year (10) period, except with respect to cases of refusal to submit to a blood test, shall be guilty of  
29 a misdemeanor; and shall be imprisoned for not more than one year; fined eight hundred dollars  
30 (\$800) to one thousand dollars (\$1,000); shall perform not less than one hundred (100) hours of  
31 public community restitution; and the person's operator's license in this state shall be suspended  
32 for a period of two (2) years to five (5) years. The sentencing judge or magistrate shall prohibit that  
33 person from operating a motor vehicle that is not equipped with an ignition interlock system and/or  
34 blood and urine testing as provided in § 31-27-2.8. The judge or magistrate shall require alcohol or

1 drug treatment for the individual. Provided, that prior to the reinstatement of a license to a person  
2 charged with a third or subsequent violation within a three-year (3) period, a hearing shall be held  
3 before a judge or magistrate. At the hearing, the judge or magistrate shall review the person's  
4 driving record, his or her employment history, family background, and any other pertinent factors  
5 that would indicate that the person has demonstrated behavior that warrants the reinstatement of  
6 his or her license.

7 (4) For a second violation within a ~~five-year (5)~~ ten-year (10) period with respect to a case  
8 of a refusal to submit to a blood test, a fine in the amount of six hundred dollars (\$600) to one  
9 thousand dollars (\$1,000); the person shall perform sixty (60) to one hundred (100) hours of public  
10 community restitution; and the person's driving license in this state shall be suspended for a period  
11 of two (2) years. The judicial officer shall require alcohol and/or drug treatment for the individual.  
12 The sentencing judicial officer shall prohibit that person from operating a motor vehicle that is not  
13 equipped with an ignition interlock system as provided in § 31-27-2.8. Such a violation with respect  
14 to refusal to submit to a chemical blood test shall be a civil offense.

15 (5) For a third or subsequent violation within a ~~five-year (5)~~ ten-year (10) period with  
16 respect to a case of a refusal to submit to a blood test, a fine in the amount of eight hundred dollars  
17 (\$800) to one thousand dollars (\$1,000); the person shall perform not less than one hundred (100)  
18 hours of public community restitution; and the person's driving license in this state shall be  
19 suspended for a period of two (2) to five (5) years. The sentencing judicial officer shall prohibit  
20 that person from operating a motor vehicle that is not equipped with an ignition interlock system  
21 as provided in § 31-27-2.8. The judicial officer shall require alcohol and/or drug treatment for the  
22 individual. Such a violation with respect to refusal to submit to a chemical test of blood shall be a  
23 civil offense. Provided, that prior to the reinstatement of a license to a person charged with a third  
24 or subsequent violation within a three-year (3) period, a hearing shall be held before a judicial  
25 officer. At the hearing, the judicial officer shall review the person's driving record, his or her  
26 employment history, family background, and any other pertinent factors that would indicate that  
27 the person has demonstrated behavior that warrants the reinstatement of their license.

28 (6) For purposes of determining the period of license suspension, a prior violation shall  
29 constitute any charge brought and sustained under the provisions of this section or § 31-27-2.

30 (7) In addition to any other fines, a highway safety assessment of five hundred dollars  
31 (\$500) shall be paid by any person found in violation of this section, the assessment to be deposited  
32 into the general fund. The assessment provided for by this subsection shall be collected from a  
33 violator before any other fines authorized by this section.

34 (8) In addition to any other fines and highway safety assessments, a two-hundred-dollar

1 (\$200) assessment shall be paid by any person found in violation of this section to support the  
2 department of health's chemical testing programs outlined in §§ 31-27-2(f) and 31-27-2(g), that  
3 shall be deposited as general revenues, not restricted receipts.

4 (9) No fines, suspensions, assessments, alcohol or drug treatment programs, course on  
5 driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance, or public community  
6 restitution provided for under this section can be suspended.

7 (10) Implied consent notice for persons eighteen (18) years of age or older: "Rhode Island  
8 law requires you to submit to a chemical test of your blood, breath, [saliva](#), or urine for the purpose  
9 of determining the chemical content of your body fluids or breath. If you refuse this testing, certain  
10 penalties can be imposed and include the following: for a first offense, your Rhode Island driver's  
11 license or privilege to operate a motor vehicle in this state can be suspended for six (6) months to  
12 one year or modified to permit operation in connection with an ignition interlock device [and/or](#)  
13 [blood and urine testing](#) for a period specified by law; a fine from two hundred dollars (\$200) to five  
14 hundred dollars (\$500) can be imposed; and you can be ordered to perform ten (10) to sixty (60)  
15 hours of community service and attend a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the  
16 influence of a controlled substance and/or alcohol or drug treatment. If you have had one or more  
17 previous offenses within the past ~~five-year-(5)~~ [ten-year \(10\)](#) years, your refusal to submit to a  
18 chemical test of breath or urine at this time can have criminal penalties, including incarceration up  
19 to six (6) months for a second offense and up to one year for a third or subsequent offense, and can  
20 carry increased license suspension or ignition interlock ~~period~~ [and/or blood and urine testing](#)  
21 [periods](#), fines, and community service. All violators shall pay a five hundred dollar (\$500) highway  
22 safety assessment fee, a two hundred dollar (\$200) department of health chemical testing programs  
23 assessment fee, and a license reinstatement fee. Refusal to submit to a chemical test of blood shall  
24 not subject you to criminal penalties for the refusal itself, but if you have one or more previous  
25 offenses other civil penalties may increase. You have the right to be examined at your own expense  
26 by a physician selected by you. If you submit to a chemical test at this time, you have the right to  
27 have an additional chemical test performed at your own expense. You will be afforded a reasonable  
28 opportunity to exercise these rights. Access to a telephone will be made available for you to make  
29 those arrangements. You may now use a telephone."

30 Use of this implied consent notice shall serve as evidence that a person's consent to a  
31 chemical test is valid in a prosecution involving driving under the influence of liquor, controlled  
32 substances, and/or drugs.

33 (d) Upon suspending or refusing to issue a license or permit as provided in subsection (a),  
34 the traffic tribunal or district court shall immediately notify the person involved in writing, and

1 upon his or her request, within fifteen (15) days, afford the person an opportunity for a hearing as  
2 early as practical upon receipt of a request in writing. Upon a hearing, the judge may administer  
3 oaths and may issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the production of relevant books  
4 and papers. If the judge finds after the hearing that:

5 (1) The law enforcement officer making the sworn report had reasonable grounds to believe  
6 that the arrested person had been driving a motor vehicle within this state while under the influence  
7 of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance, as defined in chapter 28 of title 21, or  
8 any combination of these;

9 (2) The person, while under arrest, refused to submit to the tests upon the request of a law  
10 enforcement officer;

11 (3) The person had been informed of his or her rights in accordance with § 31-27-3; and

12 (4) The person had been informed of the penalties ~~incurred as a result of noncompliance~~  
13 ~~with~~ contained in the implied consent notice set forth in subsection (c)(10) of this section, the judge  
14 shall sustain the violation. The judge shall then impose the penalties set forth in subsection (c) of  
15 this section. Action by the judge must be taken within seven (7) days after the hearing or it shall be  
16 presumed that the judge has refused to issue his or her order of suspension.

17 (e) For the purposes of this section, any test of a sample of blood, breath, or urine for the  
18 presence of alcohol that relies, in whole or in part, upon the principle of infrared light absorption is  
19 considered a chemical test.

20 (f) If any provision of this section, or the application of any provision, shall, for any reason,  
21 be judged invalid, the judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of the section,  
22 but shall be confined in this effect to the provisions or application directly involved in the  
23 controversy giving rise to the judgment.

24 SECTION 2. Section 31-41.1-11 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-41.1 entitled  
25 "Adjudication of Traffic Offenses" is hereby amended to read as follows:

26 **31-41.1-11. Jurisdiction.**

27 (a) The traffic tribunal shall have exclusive original jurisdiction over the adjudication of  
28 charges under § 31-27-2.1(c)(1) (Refusal to submit to chemical test first violation).

29 (b) The district court shall have exclusive original jurisdiction over the adjudication of  
30 charges under § 31-27-2.1(c)(2) and (3) (Refusal to submit to chemical test, second violation and  
31 third and subsequent violations).

32 (c) The traffic tribunal shall have exclusive original jurisdiction over the adjudication of  
33 charges under § 31-27-2.1(c)(4) and (5) (Refusal to submit to a chemical test, second violation and  
34 third and subsequent violations with respect to a case of refusal to submit to a blood test).

1           ~~(e)~~(d) Nothing in subsections (a) and (b) of this section shall be deemed to abrogate the  
2 jurisdiction of any municipal court under the provisions of chapter 18 of title 8 of the general laws.

3           SECTION 3. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, provided that any violation of the  
4 provisions herein occurring prior to the effective date shall remain subject to the lookback  
5 provisions in effect on the date of said violation.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES

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1           This act would extend the "lookback" period for repeat offenses involving driving under  
2 the influence of alcohol or drugs under § 31-27-2 and for repeat offenses related to failure or refusal  
3 to submit to chemical tests under § 31-27-2.1 from five (5) to ten (10) years.

4           This act would take effect on July 1, 2025, provided that any violation of the provisions  
5 herein occurring prior to the effective date shall remain subject to the lookback provisions in effect  
6 on the date of said violation.

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