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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES

Introduced By: Representative Rene R. Menard

Date Introduced: February 02, 2012

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

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

3           **31-27-2. Driving under influence of liquor or drugs.** -- (a) Whoever drives or  
4 otherwise operates any vehicle in the state while under the influence of any intoxicating liquor,  
5 drugs, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 28 of title 21, or any  
6 combination of these, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor except as provided in subdivision (d)(3)  
7 and shall be punished as provided in subsection (d) of this section.

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

18           (2) Whoever drives or otherwise operates any vehicle in the state with a blood presence  
19 of any scheduled controlled substance as defined within chapter 28 of title 21, as shown by

1 analysis of a blood or urine sample, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished as  
2 provided in subsection (d) of this section.

3 (3) The license of any person charged under subsection (a) of this section shall be  
4 immediately suspended by a bail commissioner, a judge or magistrate of the traffic tribunal or  
5 district court judge. Upon the receipt of a report from a law enforcement officer that the person  
6 was charged with a violation of this section that person's license shall be surrendered within five  
7 (5) days of notice of suspension.

8 (c) In any criminal prosecution for a violation of subsection (a) of this section, evidence  
9 as to the amount of intoxicating liquor, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in chapter  
10 28 of title 21, or any combination of these, in the defendant's blood at the time alleged as shown  
11 by a chemical analysis of the defendant's breath, blood, or urine or other bodily substance shall be  
12 admissible and competent, provided that evidence is presented that the following conditions have  
13 been complied with:

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

17 (2) A true copy of the report of the test result was mailed within seventy-two (72) hours  
18 of the taking of the test to the person submitting to a breath test.

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

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

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

28 (6) The person arrested and charged with operating 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 of these in violation of subsection (a) of this section was afforded the  
31 opportunity to have an additional chemical test. The officer arresting or so charging the person  
32 shall have informed the person of this right and afforded him or her a reasonable opportunity to  
33 exercise this right, and a notation to this effect is made in the official records of the case in the  
34 police department. Refusal to permit an additional chemical test shall render incompetent and

1 inadmissible in evidence the original report.

2 (d) (1) (i) Every person found to have violated subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall be  
3 sentenced as follows: for a first violation whose blood alcohol concentration is eight one-  
4 hundredths of one percent (.08%) but less than one-tenth of one percent (.1%) by weight or who  
5 has a blood presence of any scheduled controlled substance as defined in subdivision (b)(2) shall  
6 be subject to a fine of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) nor more than three hundred  
7 dollars (\$300), shall be required to perform ten (10) to sixty (60) hours of public community  
8 restitution, and/or shall be imprisoned for up to one year. The sentence may be served in any unit  
9 of the adult correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge and/or shall be  
10 required to attend a special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a  
11 controlled substance; provided, however, that the court may permit a servicemember or veteran to  
12 complete any court-approved counseling program administered or approved by the Veterans'  
13 Administration, and his or her driver's license shall be suspended for thirty (30) days up to one  
14 hundred eighty (180) days.

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

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

1 intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance and/or alcohol or drug treatment for  
2 the individual; provided, however, that the court may permit a servicemember or veteran to  
3 complete any court-approved counseling program administered or approved by the Veterans'  
4 Administration.

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

23 (ii) Every person convicted of a second violation within a five (5) year period whose  
24 blood alcohol concentration is fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) or above by weight as  
25 shown by a chemical analysis of a blood, breath, or urine sample or who is under the influence of  
26 a drug, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in subdivision (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,  
31 that the court may permit a servicemember or veteran to complete any court approved counseling  
32 program administered or approved by the Veterans' Administration.

33 (3) (i) Every person convicted of a third or subsequent violation within a five (5) year  
34 period with a blood alcohol concentration of eight one-hundredths of one percent (.08%) or above

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

16 (ii) Every person convicted of a third or subsequent violation within a five (5) year  
17 period whose blood alcohol concentration is fifteen hundredths of one percent (.15%) above by  
18 weight as shown by a chemical analysis of a blood, breath, or urine sample or who is under the  
19 influence of a drug, toluene or any controlled substance as defined in subdivision (b)(1) shall be  
20 subject to mandatory imprisonment of not less than three (3) years nor more than five (5) years, a  
21 mandatory fine of not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) nor more than five thousand dollars  
22 (\$5,000) and a mandatory license suspension for a period of three (3) years from the date of  
23 completion of the sentence imposed under this subsection.

24 (iii) In addition to the foregoing penalties, every person convicted of a third or  
25 subsequent violation within a five (5) year period regardless of whether any prior violation and  
26 subsequent conviction was a violation and subsequent conviction under this statute or under the  
27 driving under the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state shall be subject, in the  
28 discretion of the sentencing judge, to having the vehicle owned and operated by the violator  
29 seized and sold by the state of Rhode Island, with all funds obtained by the sale to be transferred  
30 to the general fund.

31 (4) Whoever drives or otherwise operates any vehicle in the state while under the  
32 influence of any intoxicating liquor, drugs, toluene, or any controlled substance as defined in  
33 chapter 28 of title 21, or any combination of these, when his or her license to operate is  
34 suspended, revoked or cancelled for operating under the influence of a narcotic drug or

1 intoxicating liquor shall be guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than three  
2 (3) years and by a fine or not more than three thousand dollars (\$3,000). The court shall require  
3 alcohol and/or drug treatment for the individual; provided, the penalties provided for in  
4 subdivision 31-27-2(d)(4) shall not apply to an individual who has surrendered his or her license,  
5 and served the court ordered period of suspension, but who, for any reason, has not had their  
6 license reinstated after the period of suspension, revocation, or suspension has expired; provided,  
7 further the individual shall be subject to the provisions of paragraphs 31-27-2(d)(2)(i) or (ii) or  
8 31-27-22(d)(3)(i), (ii), or (iii) regarding subsequent offenses, and any other applicable provision  
9 of section 31-27-2.

10 (5) (i) For purposes of determining the period of license suspension, a prior violation  
11 shall constitute any charge brought and sustained under the provisions of this section or section  
12 31-27-2.1.

13 (ii) Any person over the age of eighteen (18) who is convicted under this section for  
14 operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, other drugs, or a combination of  
15 these, while a child under the age of thirteen (13) years was present as a passenger in the motor  
16 vehicle when the offense was committed may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not more  
17 than one year and further shall not be entitled to the benefit of suspension or deferment of this  
18 sentence. The sentence imposed under this section may be served in any unit of the adult  
19 correctional institutions in the discretion of the sentencing judge.

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

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

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

34 (ii) If the person convicted of violating this section is under the age of eighteen (18)

1 years, for a second or subsequent violation regardless of whether any prior violation and  
2 subsequent conviction was a violation and subsequent under this statute or under the driving  
3 under the influence of liquor or drugs statute of any other state, he or she shall be subject to a  
4 mandatory suspension of his or her driving license until such time as he or she is twenty-one (21)  
5 years of age and may, in the discretion of the sentencing judge, also be sentenced to the Rhode  
6 Island training school for a period of not more than one year and/or a fine of not more than five  
7 hundred dollars (\$500).

8 (8) Any person convicted of a violation under this section may undergo a clinical  
9 assessment at the community college of Rhode Island 's center for workforce and community  
10 education. Should this clinical assessment determine problems of alcohol, drug abuse, or  
11 psychological problems associated with alcoholic or drug abuse, this person shall be referred to  
12 an appropriate facility, licensed or approved by the department of mental health, retardation and  
13 hospitals for treatment placement, case management, and monitoring. In the case of a  
14 servicemember or veteran, the court may order that the person be evaluated through the Veterans'  
15 Administration. Should the clinical assessment determine problems of alcohol, drug abuse, or  
16 psychological problems associated with alcohol or drug abuse, the person may have their  
17 treatment, case management and monitoring administered or approved by the Veterans'  
18 Administration.

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

21 (f) (1) There is established an alcohol and drug safety unit within the division of motor  
22 vehicles to administer an alcohol safety action program. The program shall provide for placement  
23 and follow-up for persons who are required to pay the highway safety assessment. The alcohol  
24 and drug safety action program will be administered in conjunction with alcohol and drug  
25 programs licensed by the department of mental health retardation and hospitals.

26 (2) Persons convicted under the provisions of this chapter shall be required to attend a  
27 special course on driving while intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance,  
28 and/or participate in an alcohol or drug treatment program; provided, however, that the court may  
29 permit a servicemember or veteran to complete any court-approved counseling program  
30 administered or approved by the Veterans' Administration. The course shall take into  
31 consideration any language barrier which may exist as to any person ordered to attend, and shall  
32 provide for instruction reasonably calculated to communicate the purposes of the course in  
33 accordance with the requirements of the subsection. Any costs reasonably incurred in connection  
34 with the provision of this accommodation shall be borne by the person being retrained. A copy of

1 any violation under this section shall be forwarded by the court to the alcohol and drug safety  
2 unit. In the event that persons convicted under the provisions of this chapter fail to attend and  
3 complete the above course or treatment program, as ordered by the judge, then the person may be  
4 brought before the court, and after a hearing as to why the order of the court was not followed,  
5 may be sentenced to jail for a period not exceeding one year.

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

8 (g) The director of the health department of the state of Rhode Island is empowered to  
9 make and file with the secretary of state regulations which prescribe the techniques and methods  
10 of chemical analysis of the person's body fluids or breath, and the qualifications and certification  
11 of individuals authorized to administer this testing and analysis.

12 (h) Jurisdiction for misdemeanor violations of this section shall be with the district court  
13 for persons eighteen (18) years of age or older and to the family court for persons under the age  
14 of eighteen (18) years. The courts shall have full authority to impose any sentence authorized and  
15 to order the suspension of any license for violations of this section. All trials in the district court  
16 and family court of violations of the section shall be scheduled within thirty (30) days of the  
17 arraignment date. No continuance or postponement shall be granted except for good cause shown.  
18 Any continuances that are necessary shall be granted for the shortest practicable time. Trials in  
19 superior court are not required to be scheduled within thirty (30) days of the arraignment date.

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

23 (j) An order to attend a special course on driving while intoxicated that shall be  
24 administered in cooperation with a college or university accredited by the state, shall include a  
25 provision to pay a reasonable tuition for the course in an amount not less than twenty-five dollars  
26 (\$25.00), and a fee of one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175), which fee shall be deposited into  
27 the general fund.

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

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



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

6           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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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 require a bail commissioner, a judge or magistrate of the traffic tribunal or  
2 district court judge to immediately suspend a person's license upon that person being charged  
3 with DUI.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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