

## Georgia DUI Laws

40-6-391. (a) A person shall not drive or be in actual physical control of any moving vehicle while:

- (1) Under the influence of alcohol to the extent that it is less safe for the person to drive;
- (2) Under the influence of any drug to the extent that it is less safe for the person to drive;
- (3) Under the intentional influence of any glue, aerosol, or other toxic vapor to the extent that it is less safe for the person to drive;
- (4) Under the combined influence of any two or more of the substances specified in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this subsection to the extent that it is less safe for the person to drive;
- (5) The person's alcohol concentration is 0.08 grams or more at any time within three hours after such driving or being in actual physical control from alcohol consumed before such driving or being in actual physical control ended; or
- (6) Subject to the provisions of subsection (b) of this Code section, there is any amount of marijuana or a controlled substance, as defined in Code Section 16-13-21, present in the person's blood or urine, or both, including the metabolites and derivatives of each or both without regard to whether or not any alcohol is present in the person's breath or blood.

(b) The fact that any person charged with violating this Code section is or has been legally entitled to use a drug shall not constitute a defense against any charge of violating this Code section; provided, however, that such person shall not be in violation of this Code section unless such person is rendered incapable of driving safely as a result of using a drug other than alcohol which such person is legally entitled to use.

(c) Every person convicted of violating this Code section shall, upon a first or second conviction thereof, be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon a third or subsequent conviction thereof, be guilty of a high and aggravated misdemeanor and shall be punished as follows:

(1) First conviction with no conviction of and no plea of nolo contendere accepted to a charge of violating this Code section within the previous five years, as measured from the dates of previous arrests for which convictions were obtained or pleas of nolo contendere were accepted to the date of the current arrest for which a conviction is obtained or a plea of nolo contendere is accepted:

(A) A fine of not less than \$300.00 nor more than \$1,000.00, which fine shall not, except as provided in subsection (g) of this Code section, be subject to suspension, stay, or probation;

(B) A period of imprisonment of not less than ten days nor more than 12 months, which period of imprisonment may, at the sole discretion of the judge, be suspended, stayed, or probated, except that if the offender's alcohol concentration at the time of the offense was 0.08 grams or more, the judge may suspend, stay, or probate all but 24 hours of any term of imprisonment imposed under this subparagraph;

(C) Not less than 40 hours of community service, except that for a conviction for violation of subsection (k) of this Code section where the person's alcohol concentration at the time of the offense was less than 0.08 grams, the period of community service shall be not less than 20 hours;

(D) Completion of a DUI Alcohol or Drug Use Risk Reduction Program approved by the Department of Human Resources. The sponsor of any such program shall provide written notice of such approval to the person upon enrollment in the program; and

(E) If the defendant is sentenced to a period of imprisonment for less than 12 months, a period of probation of 12 months less any days during which the defendant is actually incarcerated;

(2) For the second conviction within a five-year period of time, as measured from the dates of previous arrests for which convictions were obtained or pleas of nolo contendere were accepted to the date of the current arrest for which a conviction is obtained or a plea of nolo contendere is accepted:

(A) A fine of not less than \$600.00 nor more than \$1,000.00, which fine shall not, except as provided in subsection (g) of this Code section, be subject to suspension, stay, or probation;

(B) A period of imprisonment of not less than 90 days nor more than 12 months. At the sole discretion and under such terms and conditions as the judge shall impose, the judge may suspend, stay, or probate all but 48 hours of any term of imprisonment imposed under this subparagraph;

(C) Not less than 80 hours of community service, except that for a second conviction for violation of subsection (k) of this Code section where the person's alcohol concentration at the time of the offense was less than 0.08 grams, the period of community service shall be not less than 40 hours;

(D) Completion of a DUI Alcohol or Drug Use Risk Reduction Program approved by the Department of Human Resources. The sponsor of any such program shall provide written notice of such approval to the person upon enrollment in the program;

(E) Undergoing a clinical evaluation as defined in Code Section 40-5-1 and, if indicated by such evaluation, completion of a substance abuse treatment program as defined in Code Section 40-5-1; and

(F) If the defendant is sentenced to a period of imprisonment for less than 12 months, a period of probation of 12 months less any days during which the defendant is actually incarcerated; or

(3) For the third or subsequent conviction within a five-year period of time, as measured from the dates of previous arrests for which convictions were obtained or pleas of nolo contendere were accepted to the date of the current arrest for which a conviction is obtained or a plea of nolo contendere is accepted:

(A) A fine of not less than \$1,000.00 and not more than \$5,000.00, which fine shall not, except as provided in subsection (g) of this Code section, be subject to suspension, stay, or probation;

(B) A mandatory period of imprisonment of not less than 120 days nor more than 12 months. At the sole discretion and under such terms and conditions as the judge shall impose, the judge may suspend, stay, or probate all but ten days of any term of imprisonment imposed under this subparagraph;

(C) Not less than 20 days of community service, except that for a third or subsequent conviction for violation of subsection (k) of this Code section where the person's alcohol concentration at the time of the offense was less than 0.08 grams, the period of community service shall be not less than 40 hours;

(D) Completion of a DUI Alcohol or Drug Use Risk Reduction Program approved by the Department of Human Resources. The sponsor of any such program shall provide written notice of such approval to the person upon enrollment in the program;

(E) Undergoing a clinical evaluation as defined in Code Section 40-5-1 and, if indicated by such evaluation, completion of a substance abuse treatment program as defined in Code Section 40-5-1; and

(F) If the defendant is sentenced to a period of imprisonment for less than 12 months, a period of probation of 12 months less any days during which the defendant is actually incarcerated.

For the purpose of imposing a sentence under this subsection, a plea of nolo contendere or an adjudication of delinquency based on a violation of this Code section shall constitute a conviction.

(d)(1) Notwithstanding the limits set forth in any municipal charter, any municipal court of any municipality shall be authorized to impose the punishments provided for in this Code section upon a conviction of violating this Code section or upon conviction of violating any ordinance adopting the provisions of this Code section.

(2) Notwithstanding any provision of this Code section to the contrary, any court authorized to hear cases involving violations of this Code section shall be authorized to exercise the power to probate, suspend, or stay any sentence imposed. Such power shall, however, be limited to the conditions and limitations imposed by subsection (c) of this Code section.

(e) The foregoing limitations on punishment also shall apply when a defendant has been convicted of violating, by a single transaction, more than one of the four provisions of subsection (a) of this Code section.

(f) The provisions of Code Section 17-10-3, relating to general punishment for misdemeanors including traffic offenses, and the provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 8 of Title 42, relating to probation of first offenders, shall not apply to any person convicted of violating any provision of this Code section.

(g)(1) If the payment of the fine required under subsection (c) of this Code section will impose an economic hardship on the defendant, the judge, at his or her sole discretion, may order the defendant to pay such fine in installments and such order may be enforced through a contempt proceeding or a revocation of any probation otherwise authorized by this Code section.

(2) In the sole discretion of the judge, he or she may suspend up to one-half of the fine imposed under paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (c) of this Code section for a second or subsequent conviction conditioned upon the defendant's undergoing treatment in a substance abuse treatment program as defined in Code Section 40-5-1.

(h) For purposes of determining under this chapter prior convictions of or pleas of nolo contendere to violating this Code section, in addition to the offense prohibited by this Code section, a conviction of or plea of nolo contendere to any of the following offenses shall be deemed to be a violation of this Code section:

(1) Any federal law substantially conforming to or parallel with the offense covered under this Code section;

(2) Any local ordinance adopted pursuant to Article 14 of this chapter, which ordinance adopts the provisions of this Code section; or

(3) Any previously or currently existing law of this or any other state, which law was or is substantially conforming to or parallel with this Code section.

(i) A person shall not drive or be in actual physical control of any moving commercial motor vehicle while there is 0.04 percent or more by weight of alcohol in such person's blood, breath, or urine. Every person convicted of violating this subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, in addition to any disqualification resulting under Article 7 of Chapter 5 of this title, the "Uniform Commercial Driver's License Act," shall be fined as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section.

(j)(1) The clerk of the court in which a person is convicted a second or subsequent time under subsection (c) of this Code section within five years, as measured from the dates of previous arrests for which convictions were obtained or pleas of nolo contendere were accepted to the date of the current arrest for which a conviction is obtained or a plea of nolo contendere is accepted, shall cause to be published a notice of conviction for each such person convicted. Such notices of conviction shall be published in the manner of legal notices in the legal organ of the county in which such person resides or, in the case of nonresidents, in the legal organ of the county in which the person was convicted. Such notice of conviction shall be one column wide by two inches long and shall contain the photograph

taken by the arresting law enforcement agency at the time of arrest, name and address of the convicted person, and the date, time, place of arrest, and disposition of the case and shall be published once in the legal organ of the appropriate county in the second week following such conviction or as soon thereafter as publication may be made.

(2) The convicted person for which a notice of conviction is published pursuant to this subsection shall be assessed \$25.00 for the cost of publication of such notice and such assessment shall be imposed at the time of conviction in addition to any other fine imposed pursuant to this Code section.

(3) The clerk of the court, the publisher of any legal organ which publishes a notice of conviction, and any other person involved in the publication of an erroneous notice of conviction shall be immune from civil or criminal liability for such erroneous publication, provided such publication was made in good faith.

(k)(1) A person under the age of 21 shall not drive or be in actual physical control of any moving vehicle while the person's alcohol concentration is 0.02 grams or more at any time within three hours after such driving or being in physical control from alcohol consumed before such driving or being in actual physical control ended.

(2) Every person convicted of violating this subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor for the first and second convictions and upon a third or subsequent conviction thereof be guilty of a high and aggravated misdemeanor and shall be punished and fined as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section, provided that any term of imprisonment served shall be subject to the provisions of Code Section 17-10-3.1, and any period of community service imposed on such person shall be required to be completed within 60 days of the date of sentencing.

(3) No plea of nolo contendere shall be accepted for any person under the age of 21 charged with a violation of this Code section.

(4) The driver's license of any person convicted of violating this subsection shall be revoked as provided by Code Section 40-5-57.1.

(l) A person who violates this Code section while transporting in a motor vehicle a child under the age of 14 years is guilty of the separate offense of endangering a child by driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The offense of endangering a child by driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs shall not be merged with the offense of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs for the purposes of prosecution and sentencing. An offender who is convicted of a violation of this subsection shall be punished in accordance with the provisions of subsection (d) of Code Section 16-12-1, relating to the offense of contributing to the delinquency, unruliness, or deprivation of a child.

40-6-391.1 G \*\*\* CODE SECTION \*\*\* 01/23/01

40-6-391.1.

(a) The decision to accept a plea of nolo contendere to a charge of violating Code Section 40-6-391 shall be at the sole discretion of the judge but, if such plea is accepted, the penalties provided for in subsection (c) of Code Section 40-6-391 shall be imposed; provided, however, that no such plea of nolo contendere shall be accepted if the person charged with violating Code Section 40-6-391 had an alcohol concentration of more than 0.15 at any time within three hours after driving or being in control of any moving vehicle from alcohol consumed before such driving or being in control ended.

(b) If the defendant has not been convicted of or had a plea of nolo contendere accepted to a charge of violating Code Section 40-6-391 within the previous five years and if the plea of nolo contendere shall be used as provided in paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of Code Section 40-5-63, no such plea shall be accepted unless, at a minimum, the following conditions are met:

(1) The defendant has filed a verified petition with the court requesting that such plea be accepted and setting forth the facts and special circumstances necessary to enable the judge to determine that accepting such plea is in the best interest of justice; and

(2) The judge has reviewed the defendant's driving records that are on file with the Department of Public Safety.

(c) The judge, as part of the record of the disposition of the charge, shall set forth, under seal of the court, his reasons for accepting the plea of nolo contendere.

(d) The record of the disposition of the case, including the ruling required in subsection (c) of this Code section, shall be forwarded to the Department of Public Safety within ten days after disposition.

(e) If a plea of nolo contendere is accepted under the conditions set forth in subsection (b) of this Code section, the defendant's driver's license shall be forwarded to the Department of Public Safety as provided in subsection (c) of Code Section 40-5-67.

40-6-391.2 G \*\*\* CODE SECTION \*\*\* 01/23/01

40-6-391.2.

(a) Except as provided in this Code section, any motor vehicle operated by a person who has been declared a habitual violator for three violations of Code Section 40-6-391 and whose license has been revoked and who is arrested and charged with a violation of Code Section 40-6-391, is declared to be contraband and subject to forfeiture to the state, as provided in this Code section, provided that said forfeiture shall not be absolute unless the defendant is finally convicted of such offense.

(b) Any motor vehicle subject to forfeiture under subsection (a) of this Code section shall be seized immediately upon discovery by any law enforcement officer, peace officer, or law enforcement agency of this state or any political subdivision thereof who has the power to make arrests and whose duty it is to enforce this article, that said motor vehicle has been declared contraband. Said motor vehicle shall be delivered within 20 days to the district attorney whose circuit includes the county in which a seizure is made or to his duly authorized agent. At any time subsequent to the seizure, the chief officer of the seizing agency, his designee, or the district attorney may release the vehicle upon bond being posted in like manner as authorized in subsection (e) of this Code section.

(c) Within 60 days from the date of the seizure, the district attorney of the judicial circuit, or the director on his behalf, shall cause to be filed in the superior court of the county in which the motor vehicle is seized or detained an action for condemnation of such motor vehicle. The proceedings shall be brought in the name of the state by the district attorney of the circuit in which the motor vehicle was seized, and the action shall be verified by a duly authorized agent of the state in a manner required by the law of this state. The action shall describe the motor vehicle and state its location, present custodian, and the name of the owner, if known, to the duly authorized agent of the state; allege the essential elements of the violation which is claimed to exist; and conclude with a prayer of due process to enforce the forfeiture. Upon the filing of such an action, the court shall promptly cause process to issue to the present custodian in possession of the motor vehicle described in the action, commanding him to seize the motor vehicle in the action and to hold that motor vehicle for further order of the court. The owner, lessee, or any person having a duly recorded security interest in or lien on such motor vehicle shall be notified by any means of service provided for in Title 9 or by delivery of a copy of the complaint and summons by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery to said owner or lienholder or a person of suitable age or discretion having charge of said owner's premises. For purposes of this subsection, where forfeiture of a motor vehicle titled or registered in Georgia is sought, notice to the titleholder shall be deemed adequate if a copy of the complaint and summons is mailed by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery to the titleholder at the address set out in the title and an additional copy is mailed by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery to the firm, person, or corporation which holds the current registration for said motor vehicle, who shall be deemed agent for service for said titleholder, and said complaint is advertised once a week for two weeks as set out in this subsection. If the owner, lessee, or person having a duly recorded security interest in or lien on the contraband motor vehicle is unknown or resides out of the state or departs the state or cannot after due diligence be found within

the state or conceals himself so as to avoid notice, notice of the proceedings shall be published once a week for two weeks in the newspaper in which the sheriff's advertisements are published. Such publication shall be deemed notice to any and all persons having an interest in or right affected by such proceeding and any sale of the motor vehicle resulting therefrom, but shall not constitute notice to any person having a duly recorded security interest in or lien upon such motor vehicle and required to be served under this Code section unless that person is unknown or resides out of the state or departs the state or cannot after due diligence be found within the state or conceals himself to avoid notice.

(d)(1) Any party at interest may appear, by answer under oath, and file an intervention or defense within 30 days from the date of service on the condemnee of the action for condemnation. The owner, lessee, security interest holder, or lienholder shall be permitted to defend by showing that the motor vehicle seized was not subject to forfeiture under this Code section.

(2) A rented or leased vehicle shall not be subject to forfeiture unless it is established in the forfeiture proceedings that the owner of the rented or leased vehicle knew or should have known of or consented to the operation of such motor vehicle in a manner which would subject the vehicle to forfeiture. Upon learning of the address or phone number of the rental or leasing company which owns such vehicle, the district attorney shall immediately contact the company to inform it that the vehicle is available for the company to take possession.

(e) The court to which any such petition for condemnation may be referred may, in its discretion, allow any party at interest, after making said defense under subsection (d) of this Code section, to give bond and take possession of the motor vehicle seized. Such motor vehicle shall not be sold or leased without prior approval of the court. In the event the court approves such sale or lease, the proceeds arising therefrom shall be deposited in the registry of the court, pending final adjudication of the forfeiture proceeding. The court shall determine whether the bond shall be a forthcoming bond or an eventual condemnation money bond and shall also determine the amount of the bond. The enforcement of any bond so given shall be regulated by the general law applicable to such cases.

(f) If no defense or intervention is filed within 30 days from the date of service on the condemnee of the petition, judgment shall be entered by the court and the motor vehicle shall be sold. The court may direct that such property be sold by:

(1) Judicial sale as provided in Article 7 of Chapter 13 of Title 9; provided, however, that the court may establish a minimum acceptable price for such property; or

(2) Any commercially feasible means.

(g) The proceeds arising from such sale shall be deposited into the general treasury of the state or any other governmental unit whose law enforcement agency it was that originally seized the motor vehicle. It is the intent of the General Assembly that, where possible, proceeds deposited into the state treasury should be used and that proceeds vested in any local governmental unit shall be applied to fund alcohol or drug treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention and education programs, after making the necessary expenditures for:

(1) Any costs incurred in the seizure;

(2) The costs of the court and its officers; and

(3) Any cost incurred in the storage, advertisement, maintenance, or care of the motor vehicle.

(h) The interest of an owner, lessee, security interest holder, or lienholder shall not be subject to forfeiture unless the condemnor shows by a preponderance of evidence that such person knew or reasonably should have known that the operator was a habitual violator as set forth in subsection (a) of this Code section and knew or reasonably should have known that such person would operate or was operating the vehicle while in violation of Code Section 40-6-391.

(i) In any case where a vehicle which is the only family vehicle is determined to be subject to forfeiture, the court may, if it determines that the financial hardship to the family as a result of the forfeiture and sale outweighs the benefit to the state from such forfeiture, order the title to the vehicle transferred to such other family member who is a duly licensed operator and who requires the use of such vehicle for employment or family transportation purposes. Such transfer shall be subject to any valid liens and shall be granted only once.

40-6-391.3 G \*\*\* CODE SECTION \*\*\* 01/23/01

40-6-391.3.

A school bus driver licensed pursuant to Article 7 of Chapter 5 of this title shall upon a conviction of a violation of Code Section 40-6-391 while driving a school bus be punished by imprisonment for a period of not less than one year nor more than five years or by a fine of not less than \$1,000.00 nor more than \$5,000.00, or both.