

Civilian Traffic Investigators: Passage and Implementation of HB 140

What the new law means for North Carolina municipalities.

Cities and towns may soon employ civilian investigators to respond to traffic accidents involving property damage only. This new authority comes as the N.C. General Assembly approved and Gov. Roy Cooper signed into law [HB 140 Civilian Traffic Investigators](#). Passage of this legislation represents a substantial achievement for municipalities as they navigate a difficult law enforcement hiring environment and the need to have sworn officers focus on crucial public safety needs. It takes effect immediately.

With the law now in place, it is important to understand key aspects of how it must be implemented. We hope this overview assists you in doing so.

Initially, the North Carolina Justice Academy (NCAJ) will develop a statewide training program to be made available to all civilian traffic investigators. The law does not contain a timeline for development of this training, but it must be in place before a city can employ civilian traffic investigators.

Each city must set minimum standards for employment as a civilian traffic investigator and each investigator must attend the NCAJ training. Investigators must also complete at least four weeks of field training with a law enforcement officer who has experience conducting crash investigations.

While civilian crash investigators' authority does not extend to crashes involving injury, they may remove a vehicle if it is obstructing a public roadway. Cities and towns cannot issue weapons to investigators and investigators have no authority to make arrests or issue criminal process. The legislation also requires that cities create credentials identifying civilian crash investigators, and that their vehicles and uniforms are clearly distinguishable from sworn law enforcement officers.

Should you have any further questions regarding this new law and the opportunities that it presents, please contact Sa'Metria Jones at sjones@nclm.org.