

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 8 (Delegate Stewart)
Environment and Transportation

Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Driver Abatement Program - Establishment
(Dangerous Driver Accountability Act)

This bill establishes the Dangerous Driver Abatement Program, administered by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), to reduce motor vehicle-related deaths by requiring repeat offenders to complete an MVA-approved driver accountability and safety course or be subject to sanctions (including vehicle registration suspension), as specified. The bill applies to a “repeat offender” who accumulates multiple violations recorded by certain automated enforcement systems (*i.e.*, red light cameras, automated railroad grade crossing enforcement systems, school bus monitoring cameras, stop sign monitoring systems, speed cameras, or work zone speed cameras). By January 31, 2028, and each year thereafter, MVA must publish on its website and report to the General Assembly on the number of participants in the program in the immediately preceding year, disaggregated by race, income, and geography.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Although MVA can generally develop the course and administer the program with existing resources, certain provisions of the bill cannot be directly implemented, as discussed below. Revenues are likely not materially affected.

Local Effect: Potential operational and fiscal impact on local governments to provide the required citations data to MVA, as discussed below. No effect on revenues.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Repeat Offenders

The bill defines “repeat offender” as an owner of a motor vehicle that, within a 12-month period, is recorded by those automated enforcement systems a certain number of times (generally, three or more times, although the threshold is higher – five or more times – for speed cameras and work zone speed cameras).

Required Notice

MVA must provide written notice (by mail and, when possible, electronically) to each repeat offender with the following information:

- the number and type of each violation recorded by a traffic control signal monitoring system, an automated railroad grade crossing enforcement system, a school bus monitoring camera, a stop sign monitoring system, a speed monitoring system, or a work zone speed control system for which the individual is liable;
- the location of each violation;
- the location of each system or camera that recorded each violation;
- the date and time of the violations;
- the requirement to complete an MVA-approved driver accountability and safety course in accordance with the bill;
- the MVA-approved courses available (including specified information about the courses); and
- the consequences of failing to comply with the requirements of the bill.

Completion of a Driver Accountability and Safety Course

Generally, each repeat offender must successfully complete an MVA-approved driver accountability and safety course within 90 days after receiving the required notice. Accordingly, MVA must develop and post on its website a list of the approved courses that includes the following information:

- the language in which each course is provided;
- whether a course is in-person or virtual;
- the cost of each course; and
- the dates of each course.

The course provider must submit to MVA proof of successful completion, including the repeat offender's driver's license number or other MVA identifier, within 48 hours after course completion. In addition, a repeat offender may upload proof of completion to MVA's website (as MVA must provide an option to do so) or provide proof in person at an MVA office. MVA may adopt regulations specifying the file format for uploading materials.

Enforcement Provisions

If a repeat offender fails to meet the 90-day course completion requirement, MVA must suspend the renewal of the repeat offender's vehicle registration until the course is completed. The suspension must be lifted *automatically* on receipt of proof of course completion. If a repeat offender does not successfully complete the course within 180 days after receiving the required notice, the bill authorizes MVA to impound or immobilize the repeat offender's motor vehicle until the individual complies.

However, MVA may grant a waiver from required completion of the course (if specified documentation is provided by the owner) under the following circumstances:

- if the registration plates of the motor vehicle were stolen before a violation occurred and were not under the control or possession of the person at the time of a violation;
- if the person was not operating the motor vehicle at the time of a violation; or
- if the person was not the owner of the motor vehicle at the time of a violation.

Low-income Repeat Offenders and Essential Workers

A low-income repeat offender (*i.e.*, a repeat offender with an annual household income that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level) may apply for the following:

- a waiver or reduction in any applicable driver accountability and safety course fees;
- a flexible payment plan for any applicable fines; and
- access to online or community-based MVA-approved driver accountability and safety courses.

MVA must also establish a hardship appeal process for (1) essential workers and (2) individuals from households with no viable transit alternatives to a motor vehicle.

Current Law:

Automated Enforcement Systems

State law authorizes the use of various automated monitoring systems, including traffic control system monitoring systems (red light cameras), automated railroad grade crossing enforcement systems, speed monitoring systems (speed cameras), bus lane monitoring systems, school bus monitoring systems, stop sign monitoring systems, vehicle height monitoring systems, and work zone speed control systems.

Generally, pursuant to §21-809(d)(5) of the Transportation Article, a person who receives a speed camera citation, may:

- pay the civil penalty, in accordance with the instructions on the citation; or
- elect to stand trial in the District Court for the alleged violation.

With specified exceptions, penalty revenues from automated enforcement systems, including speed monitoring systems, must be paid (1) to the administering State agency or local jurisdiction, in an uncontested case and (2) directly to the District Court (and consequently the general fund) in a case that is contested in District Court.

For additional information, please see the **Appendix – Speed Monitoring Systems**.

Essential Workers

“Emergency” means a catastrophic health emergency that is the subject of an executive proclamation and is related to a communicable disease. “Essential worker” means an individual who performs a duty or work responsibility during an emergency that cannot be performed remotely or is required to be completed at the worksite and provides services that the essential employer determines to be essential or critical to its operations. “Essential employer” means a person that employs an essential worker and includes a unit of State or local government.

State Fiscal Effect:

Automated Enforcement Data

MVA advises that it can develop the new Driver Accountability and Safety Course with existing resources. However, MVA only receives automated traffic enforcement violations notifications from local jurisdictions if the vehicle owner has not satisfied a citation with the jurisdiction. In those circumstances, MVA flags the vehicle’s registration which prevents renewal until the fine(s) are paid.

Chapters 463 and 464 of 2025 impose significant limitations on the sharing of automated enforcement images (and generally requires a custodian of recorded images produced by automated enforcement systems to deny inspection of the images). According to MVA, it is unable to receive data related to automated enforcement systems except within the narrow limits of the need to place a flag on a vehicle's registration for nonpayment of a citation.

Should these limitations be removed, MVA advises that it would need to develop a method to receive all relevant citations from all local jurisdictions operating the applicable type of automated enforcement systems. MVA would monitor when a vehicle owner becomes a repeat offender (by tracking license plate numbers), send proper notice, flag the registration of the vehicle when applicable, and track course completion.

Towing and Impoundment

MVA notes that it has no method in place to impound or immobilize a vehicle with an owner who does not complete the course requirements. However, it does have an existing process (insurance compliance enforcement) to place an indicator on a vehicle that is visible to law enforcement. This indicator orders the registration plates to be seized in the event of a traffic stop.

Flag Fee Revenues

Administrative flags are placed on a vehicle's account by MVA for various reasons, including for unpaid fees or fines, and must be cleared before registration (whether initial or renewal). Under the bill, MVA must suspend the registration of an individual who fails to complete the required course within 90 days. However, the bill explicitly requires MVA to lift a suspension *automatically* upon receipt of proof of course completion. As a result, this analysis assumes flag fees will not be assessed for individuals who have their vehicle's registration suspended under the bill.

Local Fiscal Effect: Several local jurisdictions indicate that the bill has no fiscal impact. However, the Maryland Municipal League advises that local governments may incur additional costs due to the bill's reporting requirements. Currently, local governments generally only report automated enforcement data to MVA if a citation has not been satisfied. Under the bill, MVA must receive considerably more information on a recurring basis. Local governments may need to develop more robust reporting systems to provide the information specified in the bill (*e.g.*, location, date and time, etc.), potentially resulting in additional administrative costs and staff time.

Small Business Effect: Small business driving schools may benefit from the establishment of a new driver safety course, depending on the level at which MVA sets the course fee and how many individuals participate.

Additional Comments: As noted above, the bill authorizes a low-income repeat offender to apply for a “flexible payment plan for any applicable fines.” However, it is unclear what fines this provision might apply to. Because automated enforcement violations are generally paid directly to the local jurisdiction operating the system, there is no existing system in place to manage payment plans for all local automated enforcement citations.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties; Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland Municipal League; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Maryland Department of Transportation; Office of Administrative Hearings; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 4, 2026
jg/aad

Analysis by: Eric F. Pierce

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510

Appendix – Speed Monitoring Systems

Speed Monitoring Systems – Authorization and Administrative Requirements

Speed monitoring systems are authorized to be used by the State Highway Administration (SHA), the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), and local jurisdictions in specified locations as prescribed by State law. Most commonly, the systems are authorized for use in school zones; however, the systems may also be used on other specified highways and roadways, including Maryland Route 210 in Prince George’s County, Interstate 83 in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, and Maryland Route 200 in Montgomery County.

A speed monitoring system may not be used by a local jurisdiction unless its use is authorized by the governing body of the jurisdiction after reasonable notice and a public hearing. Before activating a speed monitoring system, SHA, MDTA, or a local jurisdiction, as applicable, must publish notice of the location of the system on its website and in a newspaper of general circulation in the jurisdiction. Statute prescribes additional requirements applicable to monitoring systems in certain locations. For example, speed monitoring systems in school zones may only operate Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. through 8:00 p.m.

In addition, statute includes numerous specifications that, subject to limited exception, broadly apply to the use of speed cameras in the State, including those related to:

- the placement of new speed monitoring systems (and movement of existing systems), including the timeframe during which such systems may only be used to issue warnings instead of citations;
- the placement and location of speed limit signs approaching and within an area covered by a speed monitoring system;
- the designation of an official or employee to investigate and respond to questions or concerns about the speed camera program;
- required training for speed monitoring system operators;
- required annual calibration checks for each speed monitoring system;
- guidelines for if an agency or local jurisdiction hires a contractor to operate a speed camera program;
- procedures for the use of recordings captured by a speed monitoring system as evidence; and
- data collection and reporting.

Citations and Fines

Unless the driver of the motor vehicle received a citation from a police officer at the time of the violation, the owner or the driver of a motor vehicle is subject to a civil penalty if the motor vehicle is recorded by a speed monitoring system while exceeding the posted speed limit. The authorized agency (*e.g.*, a local law enforcement agency) must mail a citation to the owner with specified information, including a copy of the recorded image, the location where the violation occurred, and the amount of the civil penalty imposed and the date by which the civil penalty should be paid. A person who receives a citation may:

- pay the civil penalty, in accordance with the instructions on the citation (*e.g.*, directly to the political subdivision for most locally administered programs); or
- elect to stand trial in the District Court for the alleged violation.

Chapter 505 of 2025 established an escalating penalty structure that generally applies for alleged violations recorded by speed monitoring systems in the State, as shown below in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1
Penalty Structure for Violations Recorded by Speed Monitoring Systems
Effective October 1, 2025

<u>Exceeding the Speed Limit by:</u>	<u>Maximum Penalty</u>
12 - 15 MPH, inclusive	\$40
16 - 19 MPH, inclusive	70
20 - 29 MPH, inclusive	120
30 - 39 MPH, inclusive	230
40 or more MPH	425

MPH: miles per hour

Source: Department of Legislative Services
