

CHAPTER 278
HB 468-FN - FINAL VERSION

20Feb2025... 0290h
06/05/2025 2484s
26Jun2025... 2903EBA

2025 SESSION

25-0708
09/11

HOUSE BILL ***468-FN***

AN ACT establishing the crime of and penalties for unlawful use of unmanned aircraft systems and changing the reckless driving minimum penalties.

SPONSORS: Rep. Roy, Rock. 31; Rep. Wheeler, Hills. 33; Sen. Birdsell, Dist 19

COMMITTEE: Criminal Justice and Public Safety

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill establishes the crime of and penalties for unlawful use of small unmanned aircraft systems. This bill further enhances the penalties for driving a vehicle in excess of 100 miles per hour.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT establishing the crime of and penalties for unlawful use of unmanned aircraft systems and changing the reckless driving minimum penalties.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 278:1 New Section; Unlawful Operation or Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems. Amend RSA 644 by
2 inserting after section 22 the following new section:

3 644:23 Unlawful Operation or Use of Small Unmanned Aircraft System.

4 I. As used in this section:

5 (a) "Aircraft" shall mean "aircraft" as it is defined in RSA 422:3, VI.

6 (b) "Operation" or "operate" shall mean "operation of aircraft" or "operate aircraft" as those
7 terms are defined in RSA 422:3, XXII.

8 (c) "Small unmanned aircraft" shall mean "small unmanned aircraft" as it is defined in RSA
9 422:3, XXVII-a.

10 (d) "Small unmanned aircraft system" shall mean "small unmanned aircraft system" as it is
11 defined in RSA 422:3, XXVII-b.

12 II. A person is guilty of a violation for a first offense, and a misdemeanor for a second or
13 subsequent offense, if such person operates a small unmanned aircraft system in violation of laws and
14 regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), including but not limited to 14 C.F.R. part 107.

15 III. A person is guilty of a misdemeanor if such a person operates a small unmanned aircraft
16 system that interferes with law enforcement, firefighting, or other emergency response operations, or
17 violates any provisions of RSA 644:9. News media personnel are exempt from this provision as long as
18 they:

19 (a) Comply with FAA Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Rule, 14 C.F.R. part 107;

20 (b) Possess a valid FAA-issued certificate of waiver or authorization (COA) for the operation
21 of a drone for news gathering purposes;

22 (c) Do not operate the drone in any way that jeopardizes the safety of law enforcement, other
23 emergency response personnel in the performance of their duties, or others on the ground; and

24 (d) Follow directives from the agency in charge of the scene, including requests to alter or
25 cease operations.

26 IV. A person is guilty of:

27 (a) A class A misdemeanor if such person negligently operates a small unmanned aircraft
28 system in a manner so as to interfere with or disrupt the flight of a human-occupied aircraft, or otherwise
29 impede the normal course of operations of any international, regional, municipal, or general aviation
30 airport.

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- 1 (b) A class B felony if such operation results in damage to a human-occupied aircraft in flight.
2 (c) A class A felony if such operation causes said aircraft to crash and such crash results in
3 death or serious bodily injury.

4 V. A person is guilty of a misdemeanor if such a person operates a small unmanned aircraft
5 system in FAA-restricted airspace over the property of a federal, state, or county correctional, penal, or
6 detention facility, and a class B felony if such operation is done with the purpose of delivering contraband
7 into the facility or to aid in the escape of a prisoner.

8 VI. A person is guilty of a class B felony if such person is knowingly in possession of or operates
9 a small unmanned aircraft system equipped with a device capable of causing serious bodily injury, death,
10 or property damage or is otherwise capable of firing or releasing a projectile. Federal, state, and
11 municipal public safety bomb squad personnel are exempted from this provision for the limited purpose of
12 use of a small unmanned aircraft system for the disposal of explosives, bombs, and hazardous devices.
13 Law enforcement's use of a small unmanned aircraft system to deploy distraction or disorientation devices
14 is exempt from this provision.

15 VII. This provision shall not apply to any law enforcement officer acting pursuant to his or her
16 lawful authority.

17 278:2 New Paragraph; Prohibitions; Unlawful Operation or Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems.
18 Amend RSA 422:28 by inserting after paragraph XIV the following new paragraph:

19 XV. For any person to operate or use a small unmanned aircraft system in violation of RSA
20 644:23.

21 278:3 New Paragraph; Penalties; Unlawful Operation or Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems. Amend
22 RSA 422:29 by inserting after paragraph IX the following new paragraph:

23 X. The penalties for a violation of RSA 422:28, XV are those provided in RSA 644:23.

24 278:4 Serious Traffic Offenses; Reckless Driving. Amend RSA 265:79 to read as follows:

25 265:79 Reckless Driving; Minimum Penalty.

26 *I. Whoever upon any way drives a vehicle recklessly, or causes a vehicle to be driven recklessly,*
27 *as defined in RSA 626:2, II(c), or so that the lives or safety of the public shall be endangered, or upon a*
28 *bet, wager, or race, or who drives a vehicle for the purpose of making a record, [~~or who drives a vehicle at~~*
29 *a speed of 100 miles per hour or greater,] and thereby violates any of the provisions of this title or any*
30 *rules adopted by the director, shall be, notwithstanding the provisions of title LXII, guilty of a violation and*
31 *fined not less than \$500 plus penalty assessment for the first offense and \$750 plus penalty assessment*
32 *for the [second] **subsequent** offense nor more than \$1,000 plus penalty assessment and his or her license*
33 *or operating privilege shall be revoked for a period of 60 days for the first offense and from 60 days to one*
34 *year for the [second] **subsequent** offense. **Any person who pleads guilty to an offense under this section***
35 *that was originally charged with an offense under RSA 265-A:2 or RSA 265-A:3 shall be required to*
36 *complete a qualified online victim impact panel program, as defined in RSA 265-A:1, VII, unless the court*
37 *determines that exceptional circumstances exist.*

38 *II. Whoever upon any way drives a vehicle at a speed of 100 miles per hour or greater and*
39 *thereby violates any of the provisions of this title or any rules adopted by the director, shall be,*

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1 *notwithstanding the provisions of title LXII, guilty of a violation and fined not less than \$750 plus penalty*
2 *assessment for the first offense and \$1,000 plus penalty assessment for the subsequent offense and his*
3 *or her license or operating privilege shall be revoked for a period of 90 days for the first offense and from*
4 *90 days to one year for the subsequent offense.*

5 278:5 Effective Date. This act shall take effect January 1, 2026.

Approved: August 01, 2025
Effective Date: January 01, 2026

