

CHAPTER 351

HABITUAL TRAFFIC OFFENDERS

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351.01 Declaration of intent. The legislature intends by enacting this chapter:

(1) To provide maximum safety for all users of the highways of this state.

(2) To deny the privilege of operating motor vehicles to persons who by their conduct and record have demonstrated their indifference for the safety and welfare of others and their disrespect for the laws, courts and administrative agencies of this state.

(3) To discourage repetition of traffic violations by individuals against the peace and dignity of this state and its political subdivisions and to impose increased and added deprivation of the privilege to operate motor vehicles upon habitual traffic offenders who have been convicted repeatedly of traffic law violations.

History: 1979 c. 333

Ch. 351, 1983 stats., is constitutional. Court is permitted no discretion in administration of this chapter. *State v. Strassburg*, 120 W (2d) 30, 352 NW (2d) 215 (Ct. App. 1984)

State's failure to warn defendant that pleading guilty to criminal traffic offenses would result in revocation under ch. 351, 1983 stats., did not void conviction. *State v. Madison*, 120 W (2d) 150, 353 NW (2d) 835 (Ct. App. 1984).

351.02 Definitions. In this chapter:

(1) "Habitual traffic offender" means any person, resident or nonresident, whose record, as maintained by the department shows that the person has accumulated the number of convictions for the separate and distinct offenses, regardless of the license under which the person was operating a motor vehicle, under par. (a) or (b) committed within a 5-year period as follows:

(a) Four or more convictions of the following separate and distinct offenses, including any combination thereof:

1. Homicide under s. 940.06, 940.08 or 940.09 involving the use of a vehicle.
2. Reckless driving under s. 346.62.
3. Driving or operating a motor vehicle in violation of s. 346.63 (1), (1m) or (2).
4. Operating a motor vehicle while his or her license or operating privilege is suspended or revoked under s. 343.44.
5. Making any false statement to the department under s. 345.17.
6. Any crime punishable as a felony under chs. 341 to 348 or any felony in the commission of which a motor vehicle is used.
7. Failure of the operator of a motor vehicle involved in an accident to stop at or near the scene of the accident and report his or her identity under s. 346.67.
8. Fleeing or attempting to elude an officer under s. 346.04 (3).

(b) Twelve or more convictions of moving violations, including violations under par. (a), of traffic regulations or of

crimes in the operation of a motor vehicle which are required to be reported under s. 343.28 or 345.37 (5).

(c) The offenses under pars. (a) and (b) are deemed to include offenses under any valid ordinance enacted by a local authority under s. 349.06 which are in strict conformity with the offenses under pars. (a) and (b), any federal law which is in strict conformity with the offenses under pars. (a) and (b) and any law of another state or valid ordinance enacted by the local authority of another state which is in strict conformity with the offenses under par. (a).

(d) If more than one offense under par. (a) or (b) arises out of the same occurrence, all of those offenses shall be treated as one offense, on the first such occasion, if the person charged has no record of prior offenses within the preceding 5-year period.

(e) For purposes of this subsection, the 5-year period does not extend back to any date which is prior to August 1, 1980.

(1m) "Repeat habitual traffic offender" means any person, resident or nonresident, whose record as maintained by the department shows that the person has been convicted of 2 offenses under sub. (1) (b) committed within one year following issuance of an occupational license or limited chauffeur's license to the person pursuant to s. 351.07 or whose record as maintained by the department shows that the person has been convicted of one offense under sub. (1) (a) or 4 offenses under sub. (1) (b) committed within 3 years following issuance of an occupational license or limited chauffeur's license to the person pursuant to s. 351.07, regardless of the license under which the person was operating a motor vehicle.

(2) "Traffic regulation" has the meaning set forth in s. 345.20 (1) (b).

History: 1979 c. 333; 1983 a. 189 s. 329 (34); 1983 a. 459, 525, 535; 1985 a. 71, 337.

351.025 Revocation. (1) The secretary shall revoke a person's operating privilege for a period of 5 years upon receipt of a record of conviction which brings the person within the definition of a habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender.

(2) (a) The revocation is effective on the date the department mails the notice of revocation, except as provided in par. (b).

(b) If the person's operating privilege is currently suspended or revoked, the revocation under this chapter is effective on the date the person surrendered his or her operator's license for the current suspension or revocation or the date of the conviction in sub. (1), whichever is later.

History: 1985 a. 71.

351.027 Hearing on revocations. (1) Whenever the secretary under authority of s. 351.025 revokes a person's operating privilege, the secretary shall immediately notify the person in writing of the revocation and of the person's right to a

hearing on the revocation as provided in sub. (2). The department shall send the notice by 1st class mail to the address most recently provided to the department by the person.

(2) If the person denies that he or she is a habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender, the person may file with the circuit court for the county in which the person resides or, in the case of a nonresident, with the circuit court for Dane county a petition for a hearing and determination by the court that the person is not a habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender. The scope of the hearing shall be limited to whether or not the person is the same person named in the record and whether or not the person was convicted of each offense shown by the record. The clerk of the court in which the petition is filed shall forward a copy of the petition to the secretary.

History: 1985 a. 71.

351.03 Secretary to certify copy of conviction record.

Upon receipt of the copy of the petition under s. 351.027, the secretary shall certify the record of conviction of any person whose record brings him or her within the definition of a habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender to the court and to the district attorney of the county in which the person resides or to the attorney general if the person is not a resident of this state. The certified record shall be prima facie evidence that the person named therein was duly convicted by the court wherein the conviction or finding was made, of each offense shown by the record. If the person denies any of the facts as stated in the record, he or she shall have the burden of proving that the fact is false.

History: 1979 c. 333; 1983 a. 525; 1985 a. 71.

351.04 District attorney or attorney general to represent secretary.

The district attorney for the county in which the person resides who receives the certified copy of record from the secretary under s. 351.03 shall represent the secretary at the hearing under s. 351.027. In the case of nonresidents, the attorney general shall represent the secretary at the hearing.

History: 1979 c. 333; 1985 a. 71.

351.05 Habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender determination by the court.

The court in which the petition under s. 351.027 is filed shall determine whether the person is a habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender. If the person denies he or she was convicted or found in violation of any offense necessary for a holding that he or she is a habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender, and if the court is not able to make the determination on the evidence before it, the court may certify the decision of the issue to the court in which the conviction or finding of violation was made. The court to which the certification was made shall conduct a hearing to determine the issue and send a certified copy of its final order determining the issue to the court in which the petition was filed.

History: 1979 c. 333; 1983 a. 525; 1985 a. 71.

351.06 Order of court. If the court finds that the person before it is not the same person named in the record or that he or she is not a habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender, the court shall order the secretary to reinstate the person's Wisconsin operating privilege. If the court finds that the person is the same person named in the record and that he or she is a habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender, the court shall deny the person's petition for a determination that the person is not a habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender. The clerk of the court shall file a copy of the order or denial of the petition

with the department which shall become a part of the records of the department.

History: 1979 c. 333; 1983 a. 525; 1985 a. 71.

351.07 Occupational license; limited chauffeur's license; conviction after issuance.

(1) A person whose operating privilege has been revoked under this chapter as a habitual traffic offender may, after 2 years of the period of revocation have elapsed, petition a judge of the circuit court for the county in which the person resides for an order authorizing the issuance of an occupational license. The person's petition shall include a compelling reason why the person should be granted an occupational license and additional reasons why the judge should believe that the person's previous conduct as a traffic offender will not be repeated. The judge shall state his or her reasons for granting or denying the petition on the record. If the judge grants the petition, the judge shall issue an order authorizing the issuance of an occupational license to the person under s. 343.10 (1r). The clerk of the court shall file a copy of the order with the department, which shall become a part of the records of the department.

(1m) (a) A person whose operating privilege has been revoked under this chapter as a habitual traffic offender may, after 2 years of the period of revocation have elapsed, petition a judge of the circuit court for the county in which the person resides for an order authorizing the issuance of a limited chauffeur's license under s. 343.126 (1m). The person's petition shall include a compelling reason why the person should be granted a limited chauffeur's license and additional reasons why the judge should believe that the person's previous conduct as a traffic offender will not be repeated. No petition under this subsection may be granted unless the person's livelihood depends upon his or her employment as a licensed chauffeur and the person furnishes proof of financial responsibility as provided in s. 343.126 (1) (b). The judge shall state his or her reasons for granting or denying the petition on the record. If the judge grants the petition, the judge shall issue an order authorizing the secretary to issue the person a limited chauffeur's license under s. 343.126 (1m). The clerk of the court shall file a copy of the order with the department, which shall become a part of the records of the department.

(b) Notwithstanding ss. 351.02 (1) (c) and 351.07 (1), 1983 stats., par. (a) and sub. (1), if the operating privilege of a person has been revoked under this chapter prior to November 23, 1985, on the basis of convictions under the law of another state or valid ordinance enacted by the local authority of another state for moving violations, exclusive of such convictions for violations in strict conformity with any moving violation under s. 351.02 (1) (a), the person may proceed under sub. (1) or par. (a), or both, at any time. This paragraph does not apply to a person whose driving record shows that the person has, within the 5-year period preceding the revocation, accumulated the number of convictions under s. 351.02 (1) (a) or (b) or a valid ordinance enacted by a local authority under s. 349.06 which is in strict conformity with the offenses under s. 351.02 (1) (a) or (b) or a federal law which is in conformity with s. 351.02 (1) (a) or (b), or any combination thereof, which brings the person within the definition of a habitual traffic offender.

(c) Paragraph (b) does not apply after November 23, 1987.

(2) (a) Upon conviction of a person who is issued an occupational license as provided by sub. (1) or a limited chauffeur's license as provided by sub. (1m) and s. 343.126 (1m) of 2 offenses under s. 351.02 (1) (b) committed within one year following issuance of the occupational license or limited chauffeur's license or of one offense under s. 351.02 (1) (a) or 4 offenses under s. 351.02 (1) (b) committed within 3

years following issuance of the occupational license or limited chauffeur's license, the secretary shall proceed under s. 351.025.

(b) In lieu of the otherwise applicable penalties for the commission of the offenses enumerated in s. 351.02 (1) (a) and (b), a person who is issued an occupational license as provided by sub. (1) or limited chauffeur's license as provided by sub. (1m) and s. 343.126 (1m) and who is convicted of an offense under s. 351.02 (1) (a) or (b) as provided in par. (a) may be required to pay not more than 200% of the maximum forfeiture or fine applicable to the offense or may be imprisoned for not more than 2 times the maximum period of imprisonment applicable to the offense or both.

History: 1983 a. 525; 1985 a. 71.

351.08 Operation of motor vehicle by habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender prohibited; penalty; enforcement. Any person who is convicted of operating a motor vehicle in this state while the revocation under this chapter is in effect shall, in addition to any penalty imposed under s. 343.44, be fined not to exceed \$5,000 and imprisoned not to exceed 180 days. No portion of the sentence may be suspended, except in a case where operating was made necessary by a situation of emergency, as determined by the court. Any person imprisoned under this section, on his or her request, may be allowed Huber law work privileges under s. 56.08. For the purpose of enforcing this section, in any case

in which the accused is charged with driving a motor vehicle while his or her license, permit or privilege to drive is suspended or revoked or is charged with driving without a license, the court before hearing the charge shall determine whether the person is a habitual traffic offender or repeat habitual traffic offender and therefore barred from operating a motor vehicle on the highways of this state.

History: 1979 c. 333; 1983 a. 525, 535, 538; 1985 a. 71.

This section authorizes enhancements to penalties under 343.44; it does not create separate substantive offense. OAG 21-86.

351.10 Appeals. An appeal to the court of appeals may be taken from any final action or order of a court entered under this chapter in the same manner and form as such an appeal would be noted, perfected and tried in any criminal case, except s. 809.30 (1) (c) does not apply.

History: 1979 c. 333; 1983 a. 535.

351.11 Application of chapter. This chapter is in addition to and not in substitution for any provision of ch. 343 or 344 requiring the revocation of an operator's license. A license may be revoked in accordance with ch. 343 or 344 notwithstanding the fact that the revocation is not mandated by this chapter. The penalty imposed under s. 351.08 is in addition to the penalty imposed under any other law or ordinance for an offense specified in s. 351.02.

History: 1979 c. 333.