



DATE: Tuesday, October 6, 2026
TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: City Attorney
SUBJECT: Adoption of the 2026 Standard Traffic Ordinance, 53rd Edition

Background: The Standard Traffic Ordinance (STO) has been published and updated annually by the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) since 1960. The publication contains more than 100 traffic offenses that can be adjudicated in municipal court and provides standardized municipal traffic laws for Kansas cities. It incorporates changes enacted by the Kansas Legislature, along with editorial revisions made by the LKM. In recent years, the City has adopted the updated STO by reference while preserving provisions unique to the City.

Discussion: The following sections were added, amended, or removed in the 53rd Edition of the STO, published in 2026.

Definition: (NEW)

A new definition for “Hand-free Device” is added in connection with the restrictions on the use of mobile telephones in designated school zones and road construction zones. The definition includes speakerphone capability, a telephone attachment, or other equipment that allows a mobile telephone to be used without either of the operator’s hands.

Section 93: Parking for Disabled and Other Vehicles (AMENDED)

Subsection (b) is amended to expand the circumstances under which the City may remove and impound an unattended motor vehicle. Under the previous provision, removal and impoundment were authorized when a vehicle had remained unattended for 48 hours or when the vehicle interfered with public highway operations. The amendment adds interference with law enforcement operations as an additional circumstance authorizing removal and impoundment.

Section 126.1: Obstructing License Plates (AMENDED)

This section is amended to expand the provisions addressing the obstruction of license plates. The amendment includes frames and borders around license plates that may make it difficult to determine the vehicle’s registration number, state of registration, or the month or year of expiration displayed on the registration decal.

Additionally, a provision previously contained in Section 126.1.1, Display of License Plate, is relocated to Section 126.1.

Section 126.1.1: Display of License Plate (AMENDED)

Subsection (c) is removed from Section 126.1.1 and relocated to Section 126.1, Obstructing License Plates. This change consolidates the applicable license plate obstruction provisions under Section 126.1.

Section 126.2.1: Use of Wireless Communication Devices in School Zones and Construction Zones (NEW)

This new section implements SB 366 and prohibits the use of a mobile telephone while operating a motor vehicle in a school zone when a reduced speed limit is being enforced or in a road construction zone when workers are present and signs are posted at the beginning of the zone alerting drivers to the workers.

The provision does not apply to law enforcement officers or emergency service personnel acting within the scope of their employment, vehicles that are safely and lawfully stationary, or mobile telephones being used with a hand free device. The provision also permits certain uses, including reporting current or ongoing illegal activity, preventing imminent injury to a person or property, summoning medical or other emergency assistance, and relaying information between a transit or for hire operator and the operator's dispatcher when the device is permanently affixed to the motor vehicle.

Holding a mobile telephone while operating a motor vehicle in a covered school zone or road construction zone creates a rebuttable presumption of a violation. The provision also establishes limitations on the confiscation, retention, and extraction of information from a mobile telephone by a law enforcement officer in connection with a violation. Warning citations will be issued through July 1, 2027.

Section 169.2: Use of Lights in Road Construction Zones (NEW)

This new section implements SB 366 and authorizes vehicles engaged in highway construction and maintenance operations to display flashing, rotating, or oscillating amber, green, or white lights at all times in a road construction zone.

The provision also authorizes stationary trailers engaged in highway construction and maintenance operations to display flashing, rotating, or oscillating white and blue lights within the area of a road construction zone when any portion of the highway is closed, subject to specified conditions.

Section 181: One Way Glass and Sun Screening Devices (AMENDED)

The section is amended to remove a provision addressing the removal or replacement of sun screening material when the material becomes torn. The remaining provisions of the section are retained.

Section 201.1: Failure to Comply with a Traffic Citation (AMENDED)

Subsection (h)(2) is removed. The former provision addressed notification by the Division of Vehicles five years after conviction when a person's driving privileges remained suspended or restricted due to a failure to comply with a traffic citation.

Financial Considerations: Other than the cost of purchasing the 53rd Edition of the STO, no additional costs to the City are anticipated.

Legal Considerations: State law permits cities to incorporate published codes by reference through an adopting ordinance. The City Attorney has prepared the proposed ordinance, which incorporates the 2026 STO (53rd Edition) into the City's traffic regulations.

Recommendation/Actions: It is recommended that City Council approve the proposed ordinance.

Attachments: Proposed ordinance