

1980 WL 121136 (S.C.A.G.)

Office of the Attorney General

State of South Carolina

April 1, 1980

**\*1 Re: Treatment of Minors convicted of traffic offenses**

Mr. E. P. Austin  
Director  
Motor Vehicle Division  
S. C. Department of Highways and Public Transportation  
P. O. Box 191  
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Dear Mr. Austin:

You have asked this office for an opinion regarding two questions. First, does the Family Court Acts secrecy provisions require the Department to treat minors differently from adults so far as records keeping requirements and effect of suspensions is concerned. Second, is the Department required to publish the names of minors whose licenses have been suspended pursuant to § 56-5-2990 as set forth in § 56-5-3000, or is it prohibited from doing so under the provisions of the Family Court Acts.

In general, the Family Court Act, or Chapter 21 of Title 14, seeks to protect juveniles from some of the harsher aspects of the criminal justice system, including the unpleasant glare of notoriety often attendant with the bringing of criminal charges. To this end § 14-21-30 closes the records of the family court to all except those who have a 'legitimate interest' and the consent of the judge. Employees of the court are prohibited from disclosing '[a]ll information obtained and social records prepared in the discharge of official duty' to anyone not specifically authorized by the Act or not expressly allowed by the judge.

I trust that this information is useful to you.

Very truly yours,

Richard D. Bybee  
Assistant Attorney General

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