

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1566

As Reported By House Committee On:
Transportation Policy & Budget

Title: An act relating to accident reports.

Brief Description: Changing accident report requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Hatfield, Cairnes and Costa; by request of Washington State Patrol.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation Policy & Budget: 2/24/97, 3/4/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY & BUDGET

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Hankins, Vice Chairman; Mielke, Vice Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Fisher, Ranking Minority Member; Cooper, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Buck; Cairnes; Chandler; Constantine; DeBolt; Gardner; Hatfield; Johnson; Murray; O'Brien; Ogden; Radcliff; Robertson; Romero; Scott; Skinner; Sterk; Wood and Zellinsky.

Staff: Jeff Doyle (786-7322).

Background: If a driver of a vehicle is involved in an accident resulting in injury or death to another person, or resulting in damage to property in excess of \$500, the driver of the vehicle is required to file a written accident report within 24 hours of the accident.

In those instances where the Washington State Patrol (WSP) must make an investigation of a vehicle accident, current law requires the trooper to determine the cause of the accident.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Drivers involved in an accident have four days to file an accident report with the WSP or local law enforcement. If a law enforcement officer investigates the scene of the accident and files a report, the driver may also file a report but is not required to do so.

When the WSP is required to investigate a motor vehicle accident, the trooper must report the circumstances of the accident, but is not required to make a legal determination regarding causation.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Drivers involved in an accident are allowed four days to report the accident rather than seven days. An emergency clause is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This process allows drivers time to have their damages estimated by a mechanic before having to file a report. The amount of duplicative paperwork is reduced, and law enforcement saves money.

Testimony Against: Seven days is too long to wait before filing a report. Insurance companies need accurate reports sooner than seven days.

Testified: Captain Marsh Pugh, Washington State Patrol (pro); Renetta Wilson, State Farm Insurance Companies (pro/with concerns); and Lynda Henriksen, Department of Licensing (pro).