
SENATE BILL 6345

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Senators Eide, Regala, Delvin, Haugen, Kohl-Welles, Rockefeller, Keiser, Fairley, Kline, Tom, and Fraser

Read first time 01/12/10. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to the use of wireless communications devices while
2 driving; and amending RCW 46.20.055, 46.20.075, 46.61.667, and
3 46.61.668.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 46.20.055 and 2006 c 219 s 14 are each amended to read
6 as follows:

7 (1) **Driver's instruction permit.** The department may issue a
8 driver's instruction permit with or without a photograph to an
9 applicant who has successfully passed all parts of the examination
10 other than the driving test, provided the information required by RCW
11 46.20.091, paid a fee of twenty dollars, and meets the following
12 requirements:

13 (a) Is at least fifteen and one-half years of age; or

14 (b) Is at least fifteen years of age and:

15 (i) Has submitted a proper application; and

16 (ii) Is enrolled in a traffic safety education program offered,
17 approved, and accredited by the superintendent of public instruction or
18 offered by a driver training school licensed and inspected by the

1 department of licensing under chapter 46.82 RCW, that includes practice
2 driving.

3 (2) **Waiver of written examination for instruction permit.** The
4 department may waive the written examination, if, at the time of
5 application, an applicant is enrolled in:

6 (a) A traffic safety education course as defined by RCW
7 28A.220.020(2); or

8 (b) A course of instruction offered by a licensed driver training
9 school as defined by RCW 46.82.280(~~(4)~~).

10 The department may require proof of registration in such a course
11 as it deems necessary.

12 (3) **Effect of instruction permit.** A person holding a driver's
13 instruction permit may drive a motor vehicle, other than a motorcycle,
14 upon the public highways if:

15 (a) The person has immediate possession of the permit; (~~and~~)

16 (b) The person is not using a wireless communications device,
17 unless the person is using the device to report illegal activity,
18 summon medical or other emergency help, or prevent injury to a person
19 or property; and

20 (c) An approved instructor, or a licensed driver with at least five
21 years of driving experience, occupies the seat beside the driver.

22 (4) **Term of instruction permit.** A driver's instruction permit is
23 valid for one year from the date of issue.

24 (a) The department may issue one additional one-year permit.

25 (b) The department may issue a third driver's permit if it finds
26 after an investigation that the permittee is diligently seeking to
27 improve driving proficiency.

28 (c) A person applying to renew an instruction permit must submit
29 the application to the department in person.

30 **Sec. 2.** RCW 46.20.075 and 2009 c 125 s 1 are each amended to read
31 as follows:

32 (1) An intermediate license authorizes the holder to drive a motor
33 vehicle under the conditions specified in this section. An applicant
34 for an intermediate license must be at least sixteen years of age and:

35 (a) Have possessed a valid instruction permit for a period of not
36 less than six months;

1 (b) Have passed a driver licensing examination administered by the
2 department;

3 (c) Have passed a course of driver's education in accordance with
4 the standards established in RCW 46.20.100;

5 (d) Present certification by his or her parent, guardian, or
6 employer to the department stating (i) that the applicant has had at
7 least fifty hours of driving experience, ten of which were at night,
8 during which the driver was supervised by a person at least twenty-one
9 years of age who has had a valid driver's license for at least three
10 years, and (ii) that the applicant has not been issued a notice of
11 traffic infraction or cited for a traffic violation that is pending at
12 the time of the application for the intermediate license;

13 (e) Not have been convicted of or found to have committed a traffic
14 violation within the last six months before the application for the
15 intermediate license; and

16 (f) Not have been adjudicated for an offense involving the use of
17 alcohol or drugs during the period the applicant held an instruction
18 permit.

19 (2) For the first six months after the issuance of an intermediate
20 license or until the holder reaches eighteen years of age, whichever
21 occurs first, the holder of the license may not operate a motor vehicle
22 that is carrying any passengers under the age of twenty who are not
23 members of the holder's immediate family as defined in RCW 42.17.020.
24 For the remaining period of the intermediate license, the holder may
25 not operate a motor vehicle that is carrying more than three passengers
26 who are under the age of twenty who are not members of the holder's
27 immediate family.

28 (3) The holder of an intermediate license may not operate a motor
29 vehicle between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. except when the holder
30 is accompanied by a parent, guardian, or a licensed driver who is at
31 least twenty-five years of age.

32 (4) The holder of an intermediate license may not operate a moving
33 motor vehicle while using a wireless communications device unless the
34 holder is using the device to report illegal activity, summon medical
35 or other emergency help, or prevent injury to a person or property.

36 (5) It is a traffic infraction for the holder of an intermediate
37 license to operate a motor vehicle in violation of the restrictions
38 imposed under this section.

1 ~~((+5))~~ (6) Except for a violation of subsection (4) of this
2 section, enforcement of this section by law enforcement officers may be
3 accomplished only as a secondary action when a driver of a motor
4 vehicle has been detained for a suspected violation of this title or an
5 equivalent local ordinance or some other offense.

6 ~~((+6))~~ (7) An intermediate licensee may drive at any hour without
7 restrictions on the number of passengers in the vehicle if necessary
8 for agricultural purposes.

9 ~~((+7))~~ (8) An intermediate licensee may drive at any hour without
10 restrictions on the number of passengers in the vehicle if, for the
11 twelve-month period following the issuance of the intermediate license,
12 he or she:

13 (a) Has not been involved in an accident involving only one motor
14 vehicle;

15 (b) Has not been involved in an accident where he or she was cited
16 in connection with the accident or was found to have caused the
17 accident;

18 (c) Has not been involved in an accident where no one was cited or
19 was found to have caused the accident; and

20 (d) Has not been convicted of or found to have committed a traffic
21 offense described in chapter 46.61 RCW or violated restrictions placed
22 on an intermediate licensee under this section.

23 **Sec. 3.** RCW 46.61.667 and 2007 c 417 s 2 are each amended to read
24 as follows:

25 (1) Except as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section,
26 a person operating a moving motor vehicle while holding a wireless
27 communications device to his or her ear is guilty of a traffic
28 infraction.

29 (2) Subsection (1) of this section does not apply to a person
30 operating:

31 (a) An authorized emergency vehicle, or a tow truck responding to
32 a disabled vehicle;

33 (b) A moving motor vehicle using a wireless communications device
34 in hands-free mode;

35 (c) A moving motor vehicle using a hand-held wireless
36 communications device to:

37 (i) Report illegal activity;

1 (ii) Summon medical or other emergency help;

2 (iii) Prevent injury to a person or property;

3 (d) A moving motor vehicle while using a hearing aid.

4 (3) Subsection (1) of this section does not restrict the operation
5 of an amateur radio station by a person who holds a valid amateur radio
6 operator license issued by the federal communications commission.

7 (4) For purposes of this section, "hands-free mode" means the use
8 of a wireless communications device with a speaker phone, headset, or
9 earpiece.

10 (5) The state preempts the field of regulating the use of wireless
11 communications devices in motor vehicles, and this section supersedes
12 any local laws, ordinances, orders, rules, or regulations enacted by a
13 political subdivision or municipality to regulate the use of wireless
14 communications devices by the operator of a motor vehicle.

15 ~~(6) ((Enforcement of this section by law enforcement officers may
16 be accomplished only as a secondary action when a driver of a motor
17 vehicle has been detained for a suspected violation of this title or an
18 equivalent local ordinance or some other offense.~~

19 (+7)) Infractions that result from the use of a wireless
20 communications device while operating a motor vehicle under this
21 section shall not become part of the driver's record under RCW
22 46.52.101 and 46.52.120. Additionally, a finding that a person has
23 committed a traffic infraction under this section shall not be made
24 available to insurance companies or employers.

25 **Sec. 4.** RCW 46.61.668 and 2007 c 416 s 1 are each amended to read
26 as follows:

27 (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, a person
28 operating a moving motor vehicle who, by means of an electronic
29 wireless communications device, other than a voice-activated global
30 positioning or navigation system that is permanently affixed to the
31 vehicle, sends, reads, or writes a text message, is guilty of a traffic
32 infraction. A person does not send, read, or write a text message when
33 he or she reads, selects, or enters a phone number or name in a
34 wireless communications device for the purpose of making a phone call.

35 (2) Subsection (1) of this section does not apply to a person
36 operating:

37 (a) An authorized emergency vehicle; or

1 (b) A moving motor vehicle while using an electronic wireless
2 communications device to:

- 3 (i) Report illegal activity;
- 4 (ii) Summon medical or other emergency help;
- 5 (iii) Prevent injury to a person or property; or
- 6 (iv) Relay information between a transit or for-hire operator and
7 that operator's dispatcher, in which the device is permanently affixed
8 to the vehicle.

9 (3) (~~Enforcement of this section by law enforcement officers may
10 be accomplished only as a secondary action when a driver of a motor
11 vehicle has been detained for a suspected violation of this title or an
12 equivalent local ordinance or some other offense.~~

13 (4)) Infractions under this section shall not become part of the
14 driver's record under RCW 46.52.101 and 46.52.120. Additionally, a
15 finding that a person has committed a traffic infraction under this
16 section shall not be made available to insurance companies or
17 employers.

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