

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1116

As of March 21, 2019

Title: An act relating to motorcycle safety.

Brief Description: Addressing motorcycle safety.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Lovick and Ryu; by request of Department of Licensing and Washington Traffic Safety Commission).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/19, 72-25.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/20/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Licensing to adopt rules establishing a motorcycle operator subsidy program, which may address testing costs, offer financial need-based subsidies for motorcycle training, and employ other strategies to improve access to motorcycle ridership.
- Modifies the motorcycle instruction permit by requiring a skills demonstration test prior to receiving the permit.
- Removes the cap on the number of hours a motorcycle skills education class may be, and removes the cap on the cost of a motorcycle skills education class.
- Increases the penalty for the traffic infraction of operating a motorcycle without the proper endorsement by adding an additional penalty of \$250, and depositing that penalty into the Motorcycle Safety Education Account.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: Motorcycle Endorsement and Training Classes. Generally, a person may not operate a motorcycle without first obtaining from the Department of Licensing (DOL) the proper motorcycle endorsement on their driver's license. This is applicable to either two-wheeled or three-wheeled motorcycles.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

There are two ways to obtain a motorcycle endorsement: (1) successfully complete a motorcycle skills education class at a motorcycle training school, which includes the knowledge and skills examination; or (2) successfully pass the motorcycle knowledge and skills examinations—typically administered at a motorcycle training school.

DOL may contract with either public or private entities to offer the motorcycle skills education classes. Motorcycle skills education courses must be a minimum of eight hours and no more than 16 hours in duration. The cost of a skills course is subsidized for Washington residents and may not exceed \$50 for riders less than age eighteen, and \$125 for riders over age eighteen or military personnel of any age stationed in Washington. However, motorcycle training schools may offer courses that are not subsidized to those willing to forgo the subsidy.

To practice on-road riding prior to taking the skills examination for the motorcycle endorsement, a person may apply for a motorcycle instruction permit. To obtain the permit, the applicant must be at least sixteen years old, have a valid driver's license, and pass the knowledge test. The permit is valid for 90 days and can be renewed up to two times.

Operating a motorcycle without the proper permit or endorsement is a traffic infraction subject to a total fine of \$136.

Summary of Bill: The 16-hour cap on a motorcycle skills education course is removed. The cap on the cost of a subsidized motorcycle education class is removed.

DOL must adopt rules to establish a motorcycle operator subsidy program, which may address testing costs, offer financial need-based subsidies for motorcycle training, and employ other strategies to improve access to motorcycle ridership.

The motorcycle instruction permit is modified to require an applicant to pass both a knowledge and skills examination to receive the permit. Two-wheeled and three-wheeled motorcycle instruction permit examinations must be separate.

A motorcyclist who fails the endorsement test, but demonstrates a level of riding skill consistent with the skills necessary to pass the motorcycle permit skills test, may receive a motorcycle permit without having to take the skills test for the permit.

The length of time a motorcycle instruction permit is valid is increased to 180 days, however, a person may only renew the permit once.

An additional penalty for driving without a valid motorcycle endorsement of \$250 is created. The additional penalty is deposited into the Motorcycle Safety Education Account. The penalty for operating a motorcycle without the proper permit or endorsement is increased to a total fine of \$386.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2020.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Senate Transportation Committee has already passed the same version of this bill out of committee. We have worked with the schools and rider groups. We believe that through training we can save a lot of lives in Washington. We want training to be a fundamental part of what we do so that motorcyclists are prepared to ride safely.

The schools really need the financial relief and the removal of the cap on the hours we can train. We can not implement the newest motorcycle instruction curriculum in the limited time provided under the current statute.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative John Lovick, Prime Sponsor; Beau Perschbacher, DOL; David Wendell, Pacific NorthWest Motorcycle Safety; Jeffrey Vaughan, Evergreen Safety Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.