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**HOUSE BILL 1231**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Young, Jacobsen, and Kloba

AN ACT Relating to the traffic lane merge zipper method; amending RCW 46.20.130, 46.82.420, and 46.82.430; and adding a new section to chapter 46.20 RCW.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 46.20.130 and 2006 c 190 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The director shall prescribe the content of the driver licensing examination and the manner of conducting the examination, which shall include, but is not limited to:

(a) A test of the applicant's eyesight and ability to see, understand, and follow highway signs regulating, warning, and directing traffic;

(b) A test of the applicant's knowledge of traffic laws and ability to understand and follow the directives of lawful authority, orally or graphically, that regulate, warn, and direct traffic in accordance with the traffic laws of this state, including testing on the late merge zipper method to be applied when two lanes are merging, which consists of drivers using both lanes of traffic until reaching the defined merge area and then alternating in "zipper" fashion into the single lane;

(c) An actual demonstration of the applicant's ability to operate a motor vehicle without jeopardizing the safety of persons or property. If the applicant is deaf or hearing impaired, the applicant may be accompanied by an interpreter to assist the applicant during the demonstration. The interpreter will be of the applicant's choosing from a list provided by the department of licensing; and

(d) Such further examination as the director deems necessary:

(i) To determine whether any facts exist that would bar the issuance of a vehicle operator's license under chapters 46.20, 46.21, and 46.29 RCW; and

(ii) To determine the applicant's fitness to operate a motor vehicle safely on the highways.

(2) If the applicant desires to drive a motorcycle or a motor-driven cycle he or she must qualify for a motorcycle endorsement under RCW 46.20.500 through 46.20.515.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 46.20 RCW to read as follows:

The department shall provide an instructional poster, video, tutorial, or document with information on the late merge zipper method, as described in RCW 46.20.130(1)(b), to be available for viewing to all driver's license renewal applicants who request a driver's license renewal at a driver licensing office.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.82.420 and 2017 c 197 s 12 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department and the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall jointly develop and maintain a required curriculum as specified in RCW 28A.220.035. The department shall furnish to each qualifying applicant for an instructor's license or a driver training school license a copy of such curriculum.

(2) In addition to information on the safe, lawful, and responsible operation of motor vehicles on the state's highways, the required curriculum shall include information on:

(a) Intermediate driver's license issuance, passenger and driving restrictions and sanctions for violating the restrictions, and the effect of traffic violations and collisions on the driving privileges;

(b) The effects of alcohol and drug use on motor vehicle operators, including information on drug and alcohol related traffic injury and mortality rates in the state of Washington and the current penalties for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol;

(c) Motorcycle awareness, approved by the director, to ensure new operators of motor vehicles have been instructed in the importance of safely sharing the road with motorcyclists;

(d) Bicycle safety, to ensure that operators of motor vehicles have been instructed in the importance of safely sharing the road with bicyclists; ((~~and~~))

(e) Pedestrian safety, to ensure that operators of motor vehicles have been instructed in the importance of safely sharing the road with pedestrians; and

(f) The late merge zipper method, as described in RCW 46.20.130(1)(b).

(3) Should the director be presented with acceptable proof that any licensed instructor or driver training school is not showing proper diligence in teaching the required curriculum, the instructor or school shall be required to appear before the director and show cause why the license of the instructor or school should not be revoked for such negligence. If the director does not accept such reasons as may be offered, the director may revoke the license of the instructor or school, or both.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.82.430 and 1998 c 165 s 6 are each amended to read as follows:

Instructional material used in driver training schools shall include information on: The proper use of the left-hand lane by motor vehicles on multilane highways; the late merge zipper method, as described in RCW 46.20.130(1)(b); and ((~~on~~)) bicyclists' and pedestrians' rights and responsibilities and suggested riding procedures in common traffic situations.

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