
Transportation Committee

SB 5482

Brief Description: Modifying provisions governing two-wheeled and three-wheeled vehicles.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen and Swecker; by request of Washington State Patrol.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the wheel size and pedal specifications from the definition of moped to conform with the federal definition.
- Amends the state's definition of a motorcycle to conform with the federal definition for a motorcycle.
- Revises the definition of a motorized foot scooter and requires the operator to wear a helmet.
- References the federal standards for helmet certification for the State of Washington regulations.

Hearing Date: 3/19/09

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306)

Background:

Moped.

A moped is a motorized device designed to travel with not more than three 16-inch or larger diameter wheels in contact with the ground, having fully operative pedals for propulsion by human power, and an electric or a liquid fuel motor with a cylinder displacement not exceeding 50 cubic centimeters which is capable of propelling the device at not more than 30 miles per hour on level ground. Presently a moped is not required to have mirrors on the left and right sides. A moped is required to be registered with Department of Licensing and the operator must have a valid driver license and wear a helmet. A moped cannot be operated on a bicycle path or trail, bikeway, equestrian trail, or hiking or recreational trail.

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.

Motorcycle.

A motor vehicle designed to travel on not more than three wheels on which the driver rides astride the motor unit or power train and which is designed to be steered with a handle bar. Motorcycles are required to have mirrors on the left and right sides. The operator must have an endorsement on their driver's license and must wear a helmet.

Motorized Foot Scooter.

A device with no more than two 10-inch or smaller diameter wheels that has handlebars, is designed to be stood or sat upon by the operator, and is powered by an internal combustion engine or electric motor that is capable of propelling the device with or without human propulsion. Motorized foot scooters can travel on any roadway or path where a bicycle is allowed. Presently there is no speed limit and the operator is not required to wear a helmet or have a driver's license.

Motorcycle Helmets.

Current law requires a sticker indicating that the helmet meets standards established by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT). The USDOT is in the process of changing the helmet standards and the required information on manufactured helmets to notify the public and law enforcement of a conforming helmet.

Current Washington State statutes are not fully in compliance with federal definitions and regulations.

Summary of Bill:

Moped.

The wheel size and pedal specifications are eliminated from the definition of moped in conformity with the federal definition of a moped. The bill adds the requirement that mopeds must have mirrors on the left and right sides.

Motorcycle.

The state's definition of a motorcycle is amended to conform with the federal definition for a motorcycle, and includes certain vehicles that have a saddle or steering wheel. An operator of an enclosed three-wheel vehicle with a steering wheel and bucket seat that meets the definition of a motorcycle must: (1) register the vehicle as a motorcycle; (2) have a valid motorcycle endorsement; and (3) not transport children under the age of five. The operator does not have to wear a helmet providing the vehicle has seat belts, a steering wheel, and the manufacturer has certified that the vehicle complies with federal standards for roof crush resistance.

Motorized Foot Scooter.

The definition of a motorized foot scooter is revised to specify a top speed of 20 miles per hour. A user of a motorized foot scooter must wear a bicycle helmet, and may not operate a scooter on sidewalks or fully-controlled limited access highways.

Motorcycle Helmet.

The bill references the federal standards for helmet certification.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.