
Transportation Committee

HB 1540

Brief Description: Requiring driver training curriculum to include instruction on sharing the road with large vehicles, including commercial motor vehicles and buses.

Sponsors: Representatives Hutchins, Timmons, Low, Cheney, Cortes, Bronoske, Couture, Griffey, Donaghy, Robertson, Barkis, Simmons, Reed, Klicker, Riccelli, Doglio, Berry, Ramel, Paul, Graham and Rule.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mandates that instruction regarding large vehicle awareness, including as it relates to sharing the road with commercial motor vehicles and buses, must be included in the required driver training curriculum.

Hearing Date: 2/6/23

Staff: Matthew Williamson (786-7291) and Jennifer Harris (786-7143).

Background:

Driver Training Education Courses.

A driver training education course is a driver's licensing requirement that must be met in certain circumstances. A person must be enrolled in a driver training education course as a condition of obtaining a driver's instruction permit. A person must have passed a driver training education course as a condition of obtaining an intermediate driver's license, which is available to individuals at least 16 years old. In addition, a person under 18 years old must have passed a driver training education course as a condition of obtaining a driver's license (with Department of Licensing [DOL] discretion to grant waivers in limited circumstances).

Driver training education courses may be administered by school districts or private driver

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training schools.

Driver Training Course Curriculum Requirements.

State law requires driver training education courses to include a minimum of 30 hours of classroom instruction and six hours of behind-the-wheel operation under a licensed instructor, or five or more hours of behind-the-wheel operation and four or more hours of driving simulation instruction under the supervision and direction of a licensed instructor, and one or more hours of additional in-vehicle driver observation.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the DOL, in consultation with Central Washington University traffic safety instructors or program content developers, jointly develop and maintain a required curriculum for driver training education courses. This curriculum must be followed by private driver training school courses and school districts that operate driver training education programs.

Most curriculum requirements are set by rule and include training on rules of the road; vehicle components; vehicle handling; driver behavior; sharing the road; attention and perception; hazard and risk management; vehicle maintenance; malfunctions; and technology; managing emergencies and adverse conditions; respect and responsibilities; and vehicle technology systems. However, certain topics are specifically required under state law. In addition to information on the safe, lawful, and responsible operation of motor vehicles on highways, the required curriculum and instructional materials must include information on:

- intermediate driver's license issuance;
- passenger and driving restrictions and sanctions for violating these restrictions;
- the effect of traffic violations and collisions on driving privileges;
- the effects of alcohol and drug use on motor vehicle operators;
- motorcycle awareness;
- bicycle safety;
- pedestrian safety;
- proper use of the left-hand lane by motor vehicles on multilane highways; and
- bicyclists' and pedestrians' rights and responsibilities and suggested riding procedures in common traffic situations.

Summary of Bill:

Commercial motor vehicle, bus, and other large vehicle awareness related to the importance of sharing the road must be included in the driver training education course curriculum requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on April 1, 2024.