

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5717

As of February 21, 2025

Title: An act relating to establishing a driver work zone and first responder safety course requirement.

Brief Description: Establishing a driver work zone and first responder safety course requirement.

Sponsors: Senators Lovick, King, Braun, Chapman, Cleveland, Cortes, Hasegawa, Lias, Lovelett, Nobles, Orwall, Valdez and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/24/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires new driver's license applicants under the age of 26, beginning May 1, 2026, to pass an online work zone and first responder safety course.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

Background: Driver Training Education—Generally. To be eligible to obtain a driver's license, a person under the age of 18 must complete a driver training education course offered by a private driver training school licensed by the Department of Licensing (DOL) or by a school district. An applicant for a driver's license 18 years of age or older must successfully pass a driver licensing exam, but is not required to complete a driver training education course to be eligible for a license.

Driver Training Education—Curriculum. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and DOL are required to jointly develop and maintain a required

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curriculum for school districts and approved private schools operating a Traffic Safety Education Program. DOL is responsible for the administration and enforcement of laws pertaining to private driver training schools and driver training education courses, and may adopt and enforce administrative rules related to these laws.

The required curriculum for private driver training schools and school districts providing a Traffic Safety Education Program must include the following information:

- the safe, lawful, and responsible operation of motor vehicles;
- 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;
- commercial vehicle, bus, and other large vehicle awareness;
- 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.

Driver training education courses offered by a private driver training school for persons under the age of 18 must include:

- at least 30 hours of classroom instruction;
- at least six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction—or five or more hours of behind-the-wheel instruction and four or more hours of driving simulation; and
- one or more hours of in-vehicle driver observation.

Driver training education courses offered by school districts must include a minimum of:

- 30 hours of classroom instruction;
- six hours of driving experience; and
- four hours of in-vehicle driver observation.

Classroom instruction may be offered through in-person, classroom-based instruction or virtual classroom-based student instruction with a live instructor, as set by administrative rule. The classroom portion may also include self-paced, online components as authorized and certified by DOL.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): An applicant for a new driver's license who is under the age of 26, beginning May 1, 2026, must pass an online work zone and first responder safety course before issuance of an intermediate license or driver's license, as applicable.

DOL may waive the online course requirement if the online course is not available at the time of application.

DOL must contract with a provider of an online work zone and first responder safety course to host an online course, to be made available at no cost to applicants.

Work zone speed safety camera system revenue in excess of system operations and maintenance costs is eligible to fund the online work zone and first responder safety course.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 2025.

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

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on May 1, 2026.