
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 7060

AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION WORKER SAFETY.

SUMMARY

This bill creates a new highway work zone and roadside vehicle safety awareness program administered by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) (§§ 3-5). It generally requires driver's license applicants and violators of the state's "move over" law or highway worker endangerment law to take the program. The bill sets various program requirements, including establishing a \$150 maximum program fee, and allows DMV to certify other organizations (e.g., licensed driving schools) to offer it. The bill also requires the DMV commissioner to adopt regulations to implement the program.

The bill requires a violator's driving record to reflect program participation for a specified time period and sets license suspension requirements for drivers who commit certain additional violations during this time period.

The bill also names (1) a section of Connecticut Special Service Road 495 in Meriden the "Andrew DiDomenico Memorial Highway" and (2) Bridge No. 01241 in Southington the "State Trooper First Class Aaron M. Pelletier Memorial Bridge" (§§ 1 & 2).

Lastly, it makes various minor, technical, and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025, except the road and bridge namings are effective upon passage.

HIGHWAY WORK ZONE AND ROADSIDE VEHICLE SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAM

The bill's DMV-administered highway work zone and roadside vehicle safety awareness program generally must be completed by (1) drivers convicted of violating the "move over" law or the law on

endangering highway workers (see BACKGROUND) and (2) applicants for a driver's license or learner's permit.

Specifically, the bill requires 16- and 17-year-old driver's license applicants who receive a learner's permit on or after October 1, 2025, to submit a program completion certificate to the DMV commissioner, as he prescribes. Beginning on the same date, it also generally applies this requirement to any driver's license applicant who (1) has not previously held a Connecticut license and (2) does not hold a valid license issued by (a) another state or U.S. territory or possession or (b) a foreign country with which the commissioner has an agreement for reciprocal recognition of driver training requirements.

Program Requirements

Under the bill, the highway work zone and roadside vehicle safety awareness program must conclude with a written or electronic test and at least:

1. review principles of safe motor vehicle operation,
2. highlight dangers of highway work zones and emphasize risks related to driving unsafely in them,
3. include testimonials from highway workers and their families,
4. emphasize the dangers of vehicles located on the highway shoulder, and
5. review proper interactions with emergency vehicles.

DMV and other program providers (see below) may offer it in person, virtually (i.e. through distance learning), or by a combination of both. The virtual option must have interactive components (e.g., mandatory interactions, participation, or testing). Any person required to attend the program due to a conviction for one of the violations discussed above must complete it in person.

Program Fee. The bill sets a maximum \$150 fee providers may charge for the program. (The cap specifically applies when the program

is provided to 16- and 17-year-olds according to related driver's license application requirements, as described above, but appears to apply for other required participants as well.)

Program Providers

The bill requires DMV to offer the program and allows the commissioner to certify other organizations (e.g., licensed driving schools) to do so. He must determine how many program providers are needed.

Under the bill, each organization or driving school seeking certification or recertification must apply to DMV as the commissioner prescribes and submit a \$350 application fee. Certifications are valid for two years and are not transferable. Additionally, each applicant must:

1. be registered to do business in Connecticut and maintain good standing with the Office of the Secretary of the State;
2. have a permanent place of business in the state where all program records are maintained and accessible to DMV during normal business hours;
3. submit to the DMV commissioner for approval a detailed curriculum and lesson plan (including any changes to them), which will be used in each program;
4. electronically transmit to the commissioner, at the times and in the form he prescribes, information on enrollment and program completion; and
5. file and maintain a \$50,000 surety bond (a) conditioned on compliance with state and federal laws or regulations related to the program and (b) as indemnity for the state's or any person's losses or expenses due to the program provider's acts or omissions.

This bond must be executed in the name of the state for the benefit of any aggrieved party, but the penalty of the bond may only be imposed

on the DMV commissioner's order after a hearing.

Under the bill, the commissioner has discretion over provider recertification.

Background Check. Before the DMV commissioner certifies an applicant to provide the program, he must investigate the applicant's character, driving history, and criminal history (including its principals and officers, in the case of business entities). The bill requires applicants to submit to the commissioner any information on current or past criminal or civil actions.

Driving Records and License Suspension

Under the bill, anyone required to attend the program due to a "move over" law or highway worker endangerment law violation, as discussed above, must have the requirement and its completion date posted on his or her driving record. The program completion date must remain on the driver's record until he or she has gone 36 consecutive months without any subsequent (1) moving or suspension violations or (2) violations of the "move over" law.

If a driver commits one of these violations before 36 months pass, the commissioner must suspend his or her driver's license for (1) 30 days upon a first conviction, (2) 60 days upon a second conviction, and (3) 90 days upon a third or subsequent conviction.

"Moving violations" and "suspension violations" are violations specified in existing law for which the DMV commissioner can require a driver, after committing a certain number of them, to attend a four-hour operator's retraining program. These violations include, for example, speeding and reckless driving.

BACKGROUND

Legislative History

The House referred the bill (File 558) to the Judiciary Committee, which reported out a substitute that replaced the prior bill and eliminated provisions:

1. making driving a motor vehicle on a limited access highway while engaged in any activity prohibited by the state's existing distracted driving law a reckless driving violation,
2. setting increased penalties for a first reckless driving offense that occurs in a highway work zone, and
3. increasing penalties for violations of the "move over" law and the law on endangering highway workers that result in the injury or death of an emergency vehicle driver or occupant or a highway worker.

Endangerment of a Highway Worker

By law, drivers generally commit the offense of endangerment of a highway worker if they are convicted of any of the following in a highway work zone with a highway worker nearby:

1. exceeding the posted speed limit by at least 15 mph;
2. failing to obey certain traffic control devices for any reason other than an emergency, avoiding an obstacle, or protecting another person's health and safety;
3. driving through or around the work zone in a lane not clearly designated for this use; or
4. physically assaulting, attempting to assault, or threatening a highway worker with a motor vehicle or other instrument.

Drivers commit the offense of "aggravated endangerment of a highway worker" if they are convicted of one of the above offenses that resulted in a highway worker's serious physical injury or death.

"Move Over" Law

The state's "move over" law requires drivers, when approaching slow or stationary emergency vehicles in the shoulder, lane, or breakdown lane, to (1) immediately slow down to a speed reasonably below the speed limit and (2) if traveling in the lane adjacent to the shoulder or lane with the emergency vehicle, move over one lane unless

it would be unsafe to do so. (While these provisions specifically apply on public roads with at least two travel lanes going in the same direction, the requirement to slow down generally also applies to two-lane roads with undivided traffic proceeding in opposite directions.)

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 34 Nay 0 (03/19/2025)

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 37 Nay 0 (04/25/2025)