
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 7160

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND CONCERNING PENALTIES FOR OPERATING A MOTOR VEHICLE AND VESSEL WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF INTOXICATING LIQUOR OR ANY DRUG, PONTOON BOATS, TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO THE MOTOR VEHICLE STATUTES, VIDEO PRESENTATION UPON LICENSE RENEWAL AND THE SAFE DRIVING PRACTICES COURSE.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

SUMMARY

§§ 1, 2, & 10 — BUSINESS ENTITY APPLICATIONS FOR CERTAIN FOR BUSINESS LICENSES

More specifically defines which individuals' civil and criminal history must be considered in licensing decisions when an applicant for certain DMV-issued business licenses (i.e. electronic issuance, dealer, repairer, and motor vehicle recycler) is a business entity

§ 1 — ELECTRONIC ISSUANCE LICENSES

Explicitly prohibits DMV from issuing an electronic issuance license to dealers, repairers, motor vehicle leasing or rental companies, or department contractors

§ 3 — DRIVER'S LICENSE RENEWAL WITHOUT PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Makes minor changes to the law permitting renewal of a driver's license without the holder's personal appearance

§§ 4 & 29 — EIGHT-HOUR SAFE DRIVING COURSE

Increases the maximum fee for the eight-hour safe driving course from \$150 to \$200 and requires any course provided through distance learning to require participants to use a camera

§§ 5 & 6 — COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE DISQUALIFICATION

Requires DMV to disqualify someone from holding a CDL or CLP for being out of compliance with medical certificate or drug and alcohol requirements; explicitly allows DMV to restore the CDL or CLP if the person fulfills applicable reinstatement procedures and pays the license restoration fee

§§ 7, 8 & 12 — DEALERS AND REPAIRERS

Modifies the standard for determining when a dealer or repairer can expand an existing licensed location on adjacent property without getting another license; increases the dealer and repairer record retention period; and exempts businesses who sell only low-speed vehicles (LSVs) from the dealer and repairer licensure requirements

§§ 9 & 10 — MOTOR VEHICLE RECYCLERS

Requires motor vehicle recyclers to stop operating if their license expires, imposes a late fee for late renewal applications, and prohibits DMV from renewing a license that has been expired for more than 45 days

§§ 11 & 23-27 — TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING CHANGES

Makes several technical and conforming changes to the motor vehicle statutes

§ 13 — TITLING OLDER VEHICLES

Prohibits DMV from requiring a surety bond as a condition of issuing a title to vehicles older than 20 model years old

§§ 14-21 — RECIPROCAL SUSPENSION PENALTIES FOR DRIVING AND BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Imposes reciprocal credential suspension penalties for convictions of driving under the influence (DUI) and boating under the influence (BUI) and related administrative per se violations

§ 22 — PONTOON BOAT REGISTRATION FEE

Eliminates the \$40 flat registration fee that currently applies to pontoon boats and instead applies the existing length-based registration fee that applies to other kinds of boats

§ 28 — VIDEO ON TRAFFIC SAFETY LAWS AT LICENSE RENEWAL

Increases the frequency with which driver's license holders must watch a traffic safety video to every renewal, rather than every other renewal

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes to laws pertaining to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), DMV-licensed businesses, driver's license renewal, commercial driver's licenses (CDLs), boat registration, and penalties for impaired driving and boating, as described in the section-by-section analysis below.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various, see below.

§§ 1, 2, & 10 — BUSINESS ENTITY APPLICATIONS FOR CERTAIN FOR BUSINESS LICENSES

More specifically defines which individuals' civil and criminal history must be considered in licensing decisions when an applicant for certain DMV-issued business licenses (i.e. electronic issuance, dealer, repairer, and motor vehicle recycler) is a business entity

By law, an applicant for a car dealer, repairer, motor vehicle recycler, or electronic issuance license may be denied a new or renewal license based on being convicted of, or found civilly liable for, certain crimes or violations. If the license applicant is a business entity, the license may be denied based on the history of certain individuals who own or control

the business.

The bill more specifically defines which individuals' civil and criminal history must be considered in licensing decisions. Under current law, it applies to officers and major stockholders. The bill instead applies these provisions to directors, officers, partners, owners, or other individuals who exercise substantial control over the business entity applying for the license or who have more than a 25% ownership interest in it.

For dealer, repairer, and electronic issuance applicants, the bill extends current law's requirement that these individuals be fingerprinted and undergo a background check. (In practice, DMV also requires motor vehicle recycler license applicants to be fingerprinted and undergo a background check.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2026, except that the provisions applicable to motor vehicle recyclers are effective July 1, 2025.

§ 1 — ELECTRONIC ISSUANCE LICENSES

Explicitly prohibits DMV from issuing an electronic issuance license to dealers, repairers, motor vehicle leasing or rental companies, or department contractors

Existing law prohibits anyone from engaging in the business of electronically filing registration or title applications without an electronic issuance license issued by DMV.

The bill prohibits DMV from issuing an electronic issuance license to licensed car dealers, repairers, leasing and rental companies, and contractors authorized to handle DMV transactions. Existing law, unchanged by the bill, allows these entities to use the department's electronic system to register vehicles or issue titles without getting an electronic issuance license.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2026

§ 3 — DRIVER'S LICENSE RENEWAL WITHOUT PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Makes minor changes to the law permitting renewal of a driver's license without the holder's personal appearance

Existing law allows the DMV commissioner to renew someone's driver's license without his or her personal appearance under several specified conditions. Under current law, one condition is that the person must have personally appeared to renew his or her license within the time limitations set in state or federal law. The bill changes this requirement to refer specifically to the timeframe established in the federal Real ID regulations (i.e. within 16 years). It also explicitly allows the commissioner to require appearance within a shorter period of time, at his discretion.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§§ 4 & 29 — EIGHT-HOUR SAFE DRIVING COURSE

Increases the maximum fee for the eight-hour safe driving course from \$150 to \$200 and requires any course provided through distance learning to require participants to use a camera

By law, youth and adult instruction permit holders must take an eight-hour course on safe driving practices before getting their driver's license. Under existing law, this course can be offered in-person in a group setting, through distance learning, or a hybrid of both, and any course provided fully or partially through distance learning must be taught in real time by a live instructor and have interactive components. The bill additionally requires that participants in any distance learning component be required to use a camera.

The bill also increases, from \$150 to \$200, the maximum fee that driving schools and high schools may charge for the eight-hour course.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025, for the fee increase and January 1, 2026, for the camera requirement.

§§ 5 & 6 — COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE DISQUALIFICATION

Requires DMV to disqualify someone from holding a CDL or CLP for being out of compliance with medical certificate or drug and alcohol requirements; explicitly allows DMV to restore the CDL or CLP if the person fulfills applicable reinstatement procedures and pays the license restoration fee

Under federal motor carrier regulations and state law, commercial driver's license (CDL) and commercial learner's permit (CLP) holders are required to complete certain drug and alcohol testing and get a

medical certificate every 24 months (or a shorter period, if directed by the medical examiner) indicating their fitness to drive.

Current law requires DMV to downgrade a CDL to a Class D driver's license or cancel a CLP within 60 days after (1) receiving notification through the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse (see *Background – Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse*) that a CDL or CLP holder is prohibited from operating a commercial vehicle or (2) the holder's medical certificate expires. The bill instead requires DMV to disqualify the person from holding a CDL or CLP. It also explicitly allows DMV to restore the CDL or CLP if the (1) person fulfills applicable reinstatement procedures and pays the license restoration fee and (2) clearinghouse changes the person's status from prohibited to not prohibited (for those disqualified due to clearinghouse notifications).

Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, affected CDL and CLP holders have the right to a hearing with DMV under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

Background — Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse

The Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse is an online database maintained by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration that gives employers and government agencies access to information about CDL and CLP holders' drug and alcohol program violations (e.g., positive drug or alcohol test results and test refusals).

§§ 7, 8 & 12 — DEALERS AND REPAIRERS

Modifies the standard for determining when a dealer or repairer can expand an existing licensed location on adjacent property without getting another license; increases the dealer and repairer record retention period; and exempts businesses who sell only low-speed vehicles (LSVs) from the dealer and repairer licensure requirements

Licensees Adding Adjacent Land

Existing law generally requires car dealers and repairers to get a separate license from DMV for each place of business they operate, but it makes an exception to this requirement for dealers and repairers that expand a licensed location by adding buildings or certain land.

Under current law, this exception applies when a dealer or repairer adds adjacent land to its place of business. Under the bill, this exemption instead applies only when a dealer adds land directly bordering or sharing a common boundary with the licensed location without any intervening highway or private roadway. Existing law allows the DMV commissioner to require licensees that add buildings or land to their business to show evidence that they comply with municipal zoning requirements, among other things.

Records Retention

By law, dealers and repairers must retain records of purchase, sale, and repair transactions pertaining to motor vehicles or major component parts. The bill extends the law's required retention period from two to three years after the transaction. Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, DMV may suspend or revoke a dealer or repairer's license or impose a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 for failing to comply with this requirement.

Low-Speed Vehicles

The bill exempts LSVs from the definition of "motor vehicle" for the purpose of the car dealer and repairer licensing statutes. In doing so, it exempts businesses that sell or repair only LSVs from the dealer licensure requirement.

PA 24-20 (§§ 33-35) made LSVs "motor vehicles" under the state motor vehicle laws. Among other things, this imposed existing law's car dealer licensing requirements on businesses selling LSVs.

Under state law and federal regulations, an LSV is a four-wheeled motor vehicle that has a (1) speed attainable in one mile of more than 20 miles per hour (mph) but not more than 25 mph on a paved, level surface and (2) gross vehicle weight rating less than 3,000 pounds.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§§ 9 & 10 — MOTOR VEHICLE RECYCLERS

Requires motor vehicle recyclers to stop operating if their license expires, imposes a late fee for late renewal applications, and prohibits DMV from renewing a license that has been expired for more than 45 days

By law, motor vehicle recyclers must biennially renew their license. If a recycler's license expires before its renewal is approved by DMV, the bill specifies that a recycler must stop operating until DMV receives its renewal application, fee, and surety bond and approves its renewal application.

The bill imposes a \$100 late fee on renewal applications that are submitted after the license's expiration date. It also prohibits DMV from renewing a recycler's license that has been expired for more than 45 days but allows a recycler whose license can no longer be renewed to apply for a new license.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§§ 11 & 23-27 — TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING CHANGES

Makes several technical and conforming changes to the motor vehicle statutes

The bill makes several technical and conforming changes to the motor vehicle statutes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025, except § 11, which is effective October 1, 2025.

§ 13 — TITLING OLDER VEHICLES

Prohibits DMV from requiring a surety bond as a condition of issuing a title to vehicles older than 20 model years old

By law, a certificate of title is not required for motor vehicles older than 20 model years old. But the law requires DMV to issue a title to these vehicles at an owner's request.

The bill prohibits DMV from requiring a surety bond as a condition of issuing a title to vehicles older than 20 model years old. DMV regulations currently require owners of vehicles to apply for a title for a vehicle manufactured prior to 1981 to either (1) surrender a valid out-of-state title certificate or (2) post a surety bond in an amount equal to twice the vehicle's value, as determined by DMV (Conn. Agencies Regs., § 14-166-1(b)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§§ 14-21 — RECIPROCAL SUSPENSION PENALTIES FOR DRIVING AND BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Imposes reciprocal credential suspension penalties for convictions of driving under the influence (DUI) and boating under the influence (BUI) and related administrative per se violations

The bill imposes reciprocal driver's license, boating certificate, and personal watercraft certificate suspension penalties for convictions of driving under the influence (DUI) and boating under the influence (BUI) and related administrative per se violations.

Under the administrative per se laws, drivers or boaters may have their credentials suspended for the following reasons, separately from the criminal process: (1) having a blood alcohol content (BAC) in excess of the applicable per se limit (generally, 0.08%); (2) being found, based on a police officer's investigation, to have been driving or boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs; and (3) refusing a chemical test (e.g., a breath test) or the nontestimonial portion of a drug influence evaluation (or DIE, which is an evaluation conducted by a specially trained police officer to determine a person's impairment from using drugs).

Penalties

The table below shows the penalties that apply under the bill for each offense. Generally, the bill applies the credential suspension penalties for one offense to the equivalent offense in the other law (e.g., a second DUI offense also subjects a person to the certificate suspension that applies for a second BUI offense). For driver's license suspensions, a required period of ignition interlock device (IID) use applies as a condition of license restoration, regardless of whether the offense triggering the suspension was committed in a motor vehicle or a boat.

Under the bill, offenders are subject to a suspension penalty for all three credentials, regardless of whether they currently hold them. If an offender does not have one of the credentials, the suspension applies to a person's operating privilege or right to operate a vessel (effectively, this means the person cannot get the credential for the length of the suspension).

Table: Certificate and License Suspension Penalties Under the Bill

Offense (§)		Driver's License	Boating or Personal Watercraft Certificate
BUI (§ 14), DUI (§ 15), or DUI with a child passenger (§ 20)	First	45 day suspension, plus one year IID use	One year suspension
	Second	45 day suspension plus three years IID use, with operation in the first year limited to certain travel (e.g., to work or school)	Three year suspension (or until age 21, whichever is longer)
	Third and subsequent	Permanent revocation*	Permanent revocation
Administrative Per Se for BUI (§ 16) or DUI (§ 17)	First	<u>Age 21 and over:</u> 45 days, plus 6 months IID use <u>Under age 21:</u> 45 days, plus 1 year IID use <u>Test/DIE Refusal:</u> 45 days, plus 1 year IID use	<u>General:</u> 90 days <u>BAC of 0.16 or more:</u> 120 days <u>Test/DIE Refusal:</u> 6 months
	Second	<u>Age 21 and over:</u> 45 days, plus 1 year IID use <u>Under age 21:</u> 45 days, plus 2 year IID use <u>Test/DIE Refusal:</u> 45 days, plus 2 year IID use	<u>General:</u> 9 months <u>BAC of 0.16 or more:</u> 10 months <u>Test Refusal/DIE:</u> 1 year
	Third and subsequent	<u>Age 21 and over:</u> 45 days, plus 2 years IID use <u>Under age 21:</u> 45 days, plus 3 years IID use <u>Test/DIE Refusal:</u> 45 days, plus 3 years IID use	<u>General:</u> 2 years <u>BAC of 0.16 or more:</u> 2 years, 6 months <u>Test/DIE Refusal:</u> 3 years
DUI in a school bus or other vehicle designated for carrying children (§ 21)	All	45 day suspension plus three years IID use, with operation in the first year limited to certain travel (e.g., to work or school)	One year suspension

*The offender is eligible for reinstatement after two years. If reinstated, he or she must drive with an IID unless the DMV commissioner lifts this requirement after 15 years.

The bill also deems equivalent boating and driving offenses as prior convictions under the bill, as shown in the table below.

Table: Offenses Considered Prior Convictions, Current Law vs. Bill

Offense (§)	<i>Considered a Prior Conviction of the Offense Under Current Law</i>	<i>Considered a Prior Conviction of the Offense Under the Bill</i>
BUI (§ 14)	BUI	BUI and DUI
DUI (§ 15)	DUI, DUI with a child passenger, DUI in a school bus or other vehicle designated for carrying children, 2 nd degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle, 2 nd degree assault with a motor vehicle, or an offense committed in another state that is equivalent to any of these offenses	DUI, DUI with a child passenger, DUI in a school bus or other vehicle designated for carrying children, 2 nd degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle, 2 nd degree assault with a motor vehicle, BUI, reckless operation of a vessel while under the influence, or an offense committed in another state that is equivalent to any of these offenses
Administrative Per Se, BUI (§ 16)	BUI administrative per se	BUI and DUI administrative per se
Administrative Per Se, DUI (§ 17)	DUI administrative per se	BUI and DUI administrative per se
DUI with a child passenger (§ 20)	DUI, DUI under age 21, DUI with a child passenger, DUI in a school bus or other vehicle designated for carrying children, 2 nd degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle, 2 nd degree assault with a motor vehicle, or an offense committed in another state that is equivalent to any of these offenses	DUI, DUI under age 21, DUI with a child passenger, DUI in a school bus or other vehicle designated for carrying children, 2 nd degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle, 2 nd degree assault with a motor vehicle, BUI, reckless operation of a vessel while under the influence, or an offense committed in another state that is equivalent to any of these offenses

Administration

Under the bill, the court must report each DUI and BUI conviction to DMV and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and the commissioners must suspend the offender's driver's license and boating or personal watercraft as the bill requires.

The bill also requires the DMV and DEEP commissioners to notify each other when they suspend a person's driver's license or certificate, and the commissioner receiving the notice must suspend the applicable credential.

Credential Issuance (§§ 18 & 19)

The bill prohibits DMV from issuing a driver's license to anyone whose boating or personal watercraft certificate is suspended or revoked or subject to pending action by DEEP that may result in suspension or revocation due to DUI or reckless operation of a vessel. It also prohibits DEEP from issuing a boating certificate to anyone whose driver's license is suspended or revoked, or subject to pending action at DMV that may result in suspension or revocation due to DUI, DUI under age 21, DUI with a child passenger, or DUI in a school bus or other vehicle designated for carrying children. (The bill does not require DMV or DEEP to notify the other about a pending action within their jurisdiction.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

§ 22 — PONTON BOAT REGISTRATION FEE

Eliminates the \$40 flat registration fee that currently applies to pontoon boats and instead applies the existing length-based registration fee that applies to other kinds of boats

By law, all boats must be registered with DMV, and the registration must be renewed annually. The annual registration fee for most boats is based on the boat's length and ranges from \$7.50 for boats under 12 feet to \$525 for boats 65 feet or over. However, under current law, pontoon boats (other than houseboats) must pay a flat registration fee of \$40.

The bill eliminates this flat fee, instead subjecting pontoon boats to the length-based fee. The table below lists the length-based boat registration fee for boats up to 35 feet long. (Most registered pontoon boats fall within the 16 to 26 foot range.)

Table: Annual Registration Fee for Boats Under 35 Feet Long

Overall Length		Fee (\$)	Overall Length		Fee (\$)
At Least	Less Than		At Least	Less Than	
—	12	7.50	23	24	82.50
12	13	11.25	24	25	90.00
13	14	15.00	25	26	97.50
14	15	18.75	26	27	105.00
15	16	22.50	27	28	112.50
16	17	30.00	28	29	120.00
17	18	37.50	29	30	127.50

Overall Length		Fee (\$)	Overall Length		Fee (\$)
At Least	Less Than		At Least	Less Than	
18	19	45.00	30	31	135.00
19	20	52.50	31	32	142.50
20	21	60.00	32	33	150.00
21	22	67.50	33	34	157.50
22	23	75.00	34	35	165.00

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 28 — VIDEO ON TRAFFIC SAFETY LAWS AT LICENSE RENEWAL

Increases the frequency with which driver's license holders must watch a traffic safety video to every renewal, rather than every other renewal

By law, the DMV commissioner must develop and revise a video about state laws impacting drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as ways to drive safely and reduce transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries. Current law requires the commissioner to require people to watch the video every other renewal. The bill instead requires that driver's license holders watch the video each time they renew their license. (Generally, a driver's license must be renewed every eight years.)

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 33 Nay 2 (03/19/2025)