

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1371

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**As Passed House:**  
February 23, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to limitations on the use of intermediate licenses.

**Brief Description:** Modifying limitations on the use of intermediate licenses.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Armstrong, Hunt, Ross, Walsh, Ormsby, Miloscia, Van De Wege, Shea, Priest, Hasegawa, Hope and Upthegrove).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Transportation: 2/3/09 [DPS].

**Floor Activity**

Passed House: 2/23/09, 92-0.

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Limits the extension of the intermediate license restrictions for involvement in an accident to accidents for which an intermediate license holder is convicted of or found to have committed a traffic infraction related to the accident.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Liias, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Rodne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Cox, Driscoll, Ericksen, Finn, Herrera, Johnson, Klippert, Kristiansen, Moeller, Morris, Rolfes, Sells, Shea, Simpson, Springer, Takko, Upthegrove, Williams and Wood.

**Staff:** David Munnecke (786-7315)

**Background:**

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*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.*

Washington's Intermediate Drivers' License (IDL) law prohibits drivers who hold an IDL from carrying passengers under 20 years of age in their car for the first six months after issuance of the license, unless the passenger is an immediate family member. During the remaining period of the IDL, up to the age of 18, the driver may not carry more than three non-family member passengers under the age of 20. Drivers who hold an IDL are also prohibited from driving between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless a licensed driver 25 or older is also in the vehicle. These restrictions may only be enforced as secondary infractions.

Beginning with the issuance of the IDL and until the age of 18:

- If a driver commits a traffic infraction, violates any IDL license restrictions, or is involved in an accident, the driver is sent a warning letter by the Department of Licensing (DOL).
- If a second offense is committed, a letter suspending the driver for six months (or until age 18, whichever is shorter) is sent to the driver.
- For a third offense, the driver is suspended until age 18.
- The driver's parents also receive a copy of any warning or suspension letter sent to the driver.

After a year of driving safely without an infraction, violation, or accident, the IDL driving restrictions expire and will not be reimposed. However, the driver is still subject to receiving the intermediate license warning letter and license suspension penalties until age 18. Driving with a suspended IDL is a misdemeanor.

#### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The extension of the intermediate license restrictions for involvement in an accident is limited to accidents for which an intermediate license holder is convicted of or found to have committed a traffic infraction related to the accident.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

#### **Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) The IDL law is effective. The restrictions and criteria that the law puts in place are important and have led to a dramatic reduction in accidents, injuries, and fatalities among teen drivers. There has been up to a 50 percent reduction in fatalities among teen drivers in a given year since the passage of this law. These types of laws were first introduced in the early 1990s, and are now in place throughout the country. However, it's not fair to punish teen drivers for accidents for which they are not responsible. This is the facet of the law that generates the most complaints from teens themselves. It doesn't make sense to punish a teen driver when they are at a red light and are rear-ended. The language in the proposed substitute bill was suggested by the Department of Licensing and still solves the problem that the original bill was designed to address.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Armstrong, prime sponsor; Dave Overstreet, Automobile Association of America Washington; and Steve Lind, Washington Traffic Safety Commission.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.