
Transportation Committee

ESB 5581

Brief Description: Modifying provisions relating to suncreening devices.

Sponsors: Senators Delvin, Marr and Shin; by request of Washington State Patrol.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Aligns State of Washington sunscreening regulations to federal standards.
- Defines "light transmission," "net film screening," "reflectance," and "safety glazing materials."
- Establishes permissible levels of suncreening permitted on motor vehicles.
- Defines a "collector vehicle" and allows darker window tinting on collector vehicles, hearses, ambulances, and other emergency vehicles.

Hearing Date: 3/17/09

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306)

Background:

Current laws regarding the sunscreening (window tinting) materials that may be applied to the windows of motor vehicles reference federal standards, as well as standards established by the Washington State Patrol (WSP).

References to several different window tinting standards has resulted in confusion among motorists, the window tinting industry, and law enforcement.

Summary of Bill:

References to sunscreening standards established by the WSP are changed to refer to the federal standards. All vehicles sold must be equipped with safety glazing material that meets federal requirements.

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.

The bill establishes definitions in statute for "light transmission," "net film screening," "reflectance," and "safety glazing materials." The maximum level of net film suncreening applied to any window, except the windshield, shall have a reflectance of 35 percent or less, and a light transmission of 24 percent or more when the vehicle is equipped with outside rearview mirrors on both the right and left. A greater degree of light reduction is permitted on a windshield as long as it is transparent and does not extend more than six inches from the top of the windshield.

The safety glazing material will not be etched or permanently altered on the windshield or other window in the passenger compartment, except for the vehicle identification number number up to one-half inch and cannot interfere with the vision of any occupant.

Certificates or decals that are required by law are permitted on vehicles so long as neither their size, nor placement on the vehicle, impair the driver's ability to safely operate the motor vehicle. Recreational products, such as toys or signs, may be applied to windows behind the driver provided they do not interfere with the driver's ability to see other vehicles, people, or objects.

A "collector vehicle" is defined as any vehicle more than 30 years old. Collector vehicles, hearses, ambulances, and other emergency medical vehicles are added to the list of vehicles that may have window tinting that is darker than otherwise allowable applied to the windows behind the driver.

A truck, motor home, or multipurpose passenger vehicle may have net film sunscreening applied on any window to the rear of the driver that has less than 24 percent light transmittance, if the light reflectance is 35 percent or less and the vehicle is equipped with outside rearview mirrors on both the right and left.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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