

---

HOUSE BILL 1231

---

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Representatives Young, Jacobsen, and Kloba

Read first time 01/18/21. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to the traffic lane merge zipper method; amending  
2 RCW 46.20.130, 46.82.420, and 46.82.430; and adding a new section to  
3 chapter 46.20 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 46.20.130 and 2006 c 190 s 1 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The director shall prescribe the content of the driver  
8 licensing examination and the manner of conducting the examination,  
9 which shall include, but is not limited to:

10 (a) A test of the applicant's eyesight and ability to see,  
11 understand, and follow highway signs regulating, warning, and  
12 directing traffic;

13 (b) A test of the applicant's knowledge of traffic laws and  
14 ability to understand and follow the directives of lawful authority,  
15 orally or graphically, that regulate, warn, and direct traffic in  
16 accordance with the traffic laws of this state, including testing on  
17 the late merge zipper method to be applied when two lanes are  
18 merging, which consists of drivers using both lanes of traffic until  
19 reaching the defined merge area and then alternating in "zipper"  
20 fashion into the single lane;

1 (c) An actual demonstration of the applicant's ability to operate  
2 a motor vehicle without jeopardizing the safety of persons or  
3 property. If the applicant is deaf or hearing impaired, the applicant  
4 may be accompanied by an interpreter to assist the applicant during  
5 the demonstration. The interpreter will be of the applicant's  
6 choosing from a list provided by the department of licensing; and

7 (d) Such further examination as the director deems necessary:

8 (i) To determine whether any facts exist that would bar the  
9 issuance of a vehicle operator's license under chapters 46.20, 46.21,  
10 and 46.29 RCW; and

11 (ii) To determine the applicant's fitness to operate a motor  
12 vehicle safely on the highways.

13 (2) If the applicant desires to drive a motorcycle or a motor-  
14 driven cycle he or she must qualify for a motorcycle endorsement  
15 under RCW 46.20.500 through 46.20.515.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 46.20  
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 The department shall provide an instructional poster, video,  
19 tutorial, or document with information on the late merge zipper  
20 method, as described in RCW 46.20.130(1)(b), to be available for  
21 viewing to all driver's license renewal applicants who request a  
22 driver's license renewal at a driver licensing office.

23 **Sec. 3.** RCW 46.82.420 and 2017 c 197 s 12 are each amended to  
24 read as follows:

25 (1) The department and the office of the superintendent of public  
26 instruction shall jointly develop and maintain a required curriculum  
27 as specified in RCW 28A.220.035. The department shall furnish to each  
28 qualifying applicant for an instructor's license or a driver training  
29 school license a copy of such curriculum.

30 (2) In addition to information on the safe, lawful, and  
31 responsible operation of motor vehicles on the state's highways, the  
32 required curriculum shall include information on:

33 (a) Intermediate driver's license issuance, passenger and driving  
34 restrictions and sanctions for violating the restrictions, and the  
35 effect of traffic violations and collisions on the driving  
36 privileges;

37 (b) The effects of alcohol and drug use on motor vehicle  
38 operators, including information on drug and alcohol related traffic

1 injury and mortality rates in the state of Washington and the current  
2 penalties for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol;

3 (c) Motorcycle awareness, approved by the director, to ensure new  
4 operators of motor vehicles have been instructed in the importance of  
5 safely sharing the road with motorcyclists;

6 (d) Bicycle safety, to ensure that operators of motor vehicles  
7 have been instructed in the importance of safely sharing the road  
8 with bicyclists; ~~((and))~~

9 (e) Pedestrian safety, to ensure that operators of motor vehicles  
10 have been instructed in the importance of safely sharing the road  
11 with pedestrians; and

12 (f) The late merge zipper method, as described in RCW  
13 46.20.130(1)(b).

14 (3) Should the director be presented with acceptable proof that  
15 any licensed instructor or driver training school is not showing  
16 proper diligence in teaching the required curriculum, the instructor  
17 or school shall be required to appear before the director and show  
18 cause why the license of the instructor or school should not be  
19 revoked for such negligence. If the director does not accept such  
20 reasons as may be offered, the director may revoke the license of the  
21 instructor or school, or both.

22 **Sec. 4.** RCW 46.82.430 and 1998 c 165 s 6 are each amended to  
23 read as follows:

24 Instructional material used in driver training schools shall  
25 include information on: The proper use of the left-hand lane by motor  
26 vehicles on multilane highways; the late merge zipper method, as  
27 described in RCW 46.20.130(1)(b); and ~~((and))~~ bicyclists' and  
28 pedestrians' rights and responsibilities and suggested riding  
29 procedures in common traffic situations.

--- END ---