

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1319

C 29 L 23
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Addressing collision reporting criteria triggering driver's license reexamination.

Sponsors: Representatives Reed, Cortes, Berry, Ramel, Cheney, Waters and Kloba.

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

Background:

Law Enforcement Reporting of Traffic Collisions.

A law enforcement officer present at the scene of a traffic collision or in possession of facts concerning a traffic collision is required to make a report of the collision. A law enforcement officer must report to the Department of Licensing (DOL), on a form prescribed by the DOL, the identity of the operator of a vehicle involved in a collision when the collision results in a fatality and the officer has reasonable grounds to believe the operator of the vehicle caused the collision.

A law enforcement officer must also report to the DOL, on a form prescribed by the DOL, the identity of the operator of a vehicle involved in a collision when the collision results in a serious injury and the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the operator who caused the serious injury may not be competent to operate a motor vehicle.

Driver Reexamination and Evaluation.

The DOL must require a driver reported by a law enforcement officer following a traffic collision to submit to a driver examination. The driver examination must be completed within 120 days of the DOL's receipt of the law enforcement officer's report, unless the DOL grants a time extension requested by a driver. The DOL may also require a person reported to obtain a certificate showing his or her condition signed by a licensed physician or other authority designated by the DOL. The DOL may suspend or revoke the driver's license of a person who does not complete the required driver examination.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Vehicular Assault.

The elements that must be met for a person to be guilty of vehicular assault were broadened in 2001. Prior to that time a person was guilty of vehicular assault if he or she operated or drove a vehicle:

- in a reckless manner, and this conduct was the proximate cause of "serious bodily injury" to another; or
- while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or certain drugs specified in state law, and this conduct was the proximate cause of "serious bodily injury" to another.

"Serious bodily injury" was defined as bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, serious permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any part or organ of the body.

Legislation modified the above elements that had to be met to be guilty of vehicular assault in 2001 by substituting the requirement that the conduct be the proximate cause of "serious bodily injury" to another person with the requirement that the operation of the vehicle cause "substantial bodily harm" to another person. A third set of criteria that could be met for a person to be guilty of vehicular assault was also added: if a person operates or drives a vehicle with disregard for the safety of others and causes "substantial bodily harm" to another person, he or she is guilty of vehicular assault.

"Substantial bodily harm" is defined as bodily injury that involves a temporary but substantial disfigurement, or which causes a temporary but substantial loss or impairment of the function of any bodily part or organ, or which causes a fracture of any bodily part.

Summary:

A law enforcement officer must report the identity of the operator of a vehicle involved in a collision to the DOL when the collision results in "substantial bodily harm" and the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the operator who caused the substantial bodily harm may not be competent to operate a motor vehicle, broadening when a driver is reported to the DOL after a collision and must take a driver examination and may be evaluated for his or her ability to drive a vehicle.

"Substantial bodily harm" is defined by applying the same definition to the term that applies when the term is used in the criteria that must be met for a person to be guilty of vehicular assault.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96	0
Senate	49	0

Effective: July 23, 2023