

1 ~~three~~ 2013, a person may not operate a passenger vehicle on a
2 public street or highway of this state unless the person, any
3 passenger in the back seat under eighteen years of age and any
4 passenger in the front seat of ~~such~~ the passenger vehicle is
5 restrained by a safety belt meeting applicable federal motor
6 vehicle safety standards. For the purposes of this section, the
7 term "passenger vehicle" means a motor vehicle which is designed
8 for transporting ten passengers or less, including the driver,
9 except that ~~such~~ the term does not include a motorcycle, a trailer
10 or any motor vehicle which is not required on the date of the
11 enactment of this section under a federal motor vehicle safety
12 standard to be equipped with a belt system. The provisions of this
13 section ~~shall~~ apply to all passenger vehicles manufactured after
14 January 1, 1967, and being 1968 models and newer.

15 (b) The required use of safety belts as provided ~~herein~~ in
16 this section does not apply to a duly appointed or contracted rural
17 mail carrier of the United States Postal Service who is actually
18 making mail deliveries or to a passenger or operator with a
19 physically disabling condition whose physical disability would
20 prevent appropriate restraint in ~~such~~ the safety belt if the
21 condition is duly certified by a physician who ~~shall state~~ states
22 the nature of the disability as well as the reason ~~such~~ the
23 restraint is inappropriate. The Division of Motor Vehicles shall

1 ~~adopt~~ propose rules for legislative approval, in accordance with
2 the provisions of chapter twenty-nine-a of this code, to establish
3 a method to certify the physical disability and to require use of
4 an alternative restraint system where feasible or to waive the
5 requirement for the use of any restraint system.

6 (c) Any person who violates the provisions of this section
7 shall be fined ~~not more than twenty-five~~ \$15. ~~No court costs or~~
8 ~~other fees shall~~ Court costs or other fees may not be assessed for
9 a violation of this section. ~~Enforcement of this section shall be~~
10 ~~accomplished only as a secondary action when a driver of a~~
11 ~~passenger vehicle has been detained for probable cause of violating~~
12 ~~another section of this code.~~

13 (d) A violation of this section is not admissible as evidence
14 of negligence or contributory negligence or comparative negligence
15 in any civil action or proceeding for damages and ~~shall~~ is not be
16 admissible in mitigation of damages: *Provided*, That the court may,
17 upon motion of the defendant, conduct an in camera hearing to
18 determine whether an injured party's failure to wear a safety belt
19 was a proximate cause of the injuries complained of. Upon ~~such~~ a
20 finding by the court, the court may then, in a jury trial, by
21 special interrogatory to the jury, determine: (1) That the injured
22 party failed to wear a safety belt; and (2) that the failure to
23 wear the safety belt constituted a failure to mitigate damages.

1 The trier of fact may reduce the injured party's recovery for
2 medical damages by an amount not to exceed five percent ~~thereof of~~
3 the medical damages. In the event the plaintiff stipulates to the
4 reduction of five percent of medical damages, the court shall make
5 the calculations and the issue of mitigation of damages for failure
6 to wear a safety belt ~~shall~~ may not be presented to the jury. In
7 all cases, the actual computation of the dollar amount reduction
8 shall be determined by the court.

9 (e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this code to the
10 contrary, no points may be entered on any driver's record
11 maintained by the Division of Motor Vehicles as a result of a
12 violation of this section.

13 ~~(f) Commencing the first day of July, one thousand nine~~
14 ~~hundred ninety-three~~ The Governor's Highway Safety Program, in
15 cooperation with the ~~division of public safety~~ West Virginia State
16 Police and any other state departments or agencies and with county
17 and municipal law-enforcement agencies, shall initiate and conduct
18 an educational program designed to encourage compliance with safety
19 belt usage laws. This program shall be focused on the effectiveness
20 of safety belts, the monetary savings and the other benefits to the
21 public from usage of safety belts and the requirements and
22 penalties specified in this law.

23 (g) Nothing contained in this section ~~shall be construed to~~

1 ~~abrogate or alter~~ abrogates or alters the provisions of section
2 forty-six of this article relating to the mandatory use of child
3 passenger safety devices.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to change the offense of failure to wear a safety belt to a primary offense.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.