

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2023 REGULAR SESSION

Revised

Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 250

BY SENATORS CLEMENTS AND WOELFEL

[Originating in the Committee on Transportation and

Infrastructure; reported on February 7, 2023]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §17B-2-3a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
2 to require certain drivers in the graduated driver's license program to display a student
3 driver sign; specifying sign requirement; authorizing Division of Motor Vehicles to distribute
4 and provide information on signs; making violators subject to penalties; and providing for
5 limited court-related cost and fee exemption.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. ISSUANCE OF LICENSE, EXPIRATION AND RENEWAL.

§17B-2-3a. Graduated driver's license.

1 (a) A person under the age of 18 may not operate a motor vehicle unless he or she has
2 obtained a graduated driver's license in accordance with the three-level graduated driver's license
3 system described in the following provisions.

4 (b) Any person under the age of 21, regardless of class or level of licensure, who operates
5 a motor vehicle with any measurable alcohol in his or her system is subject to §17C-5-2 and §17C-
6 5A-2 of this code. Any person under the age of 17, regardless of class or licensure level, is subject
7 to the mandatory school attendance and satisfactory academic progress provisions of §18-8-11
8 of this code: *Provided*, That a person may otherwise be eligible for a restricted license or
9 instruction permit pursuant to §18-8-11.

10 (c) *Level one instruction permit.* — An applicant who is 15 years or older meeting all other
11 requirements prescribed in this code may be issued a level one instruction permit.

12 (1) *Eligibility.* — The division may not issue a level one instruction permit unless the
13 applicant:

14 (A) Presents a completed application, as prescribed by §17B-2-6 of this code, which is
15 accompanied by a writing, duly acknowledged, consenting to the issuance of the graduated
16 driver's license, and executed by a parent or guardian entitled to custody of the applicant;

17 (B) Presents a certified copy of a birth certificate issued by a state or other governmental
18 entity responsible for vital records unexpired, or a valid passport issued by the United States

19 government evidencing that the applicant meets the minimum age requirement and is of verifiable
20 identity;

21 (C) Passes the vision and written knowledge examination and completes the driving under
22 the influence awareness program, as prescribed in §17B-2-7 of this code; and

23 (D) Pays a fee of \$7.50, which permits the applicant one attempt at the written knowledge
24 test. The Division of Motor Vehicles may adjust this fee every five years on September 1, based
25 on the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics most current Consumer Price Index:
26 *Provided*, That an increase in the fee may not exceed 10 percent of the total fee amount in a
27 single year.

28 (2) *Terms and conditions of instruction permit.* — A level one instruction permit issued
29 under this section is valid until 30 days after the date the applicant attains the age of 18 and is
30 not renewable: *Provided*, That for an applicant who is an active member of any branch of the
31 United States military, a level one instruction permit issued under the provisions of this section is
32 valid until 180 days after the date the applicant attains the age of 18. However, any permit holder
33 who allows his or her permit to expire prior to successfully passing the road skills portion of the
34 driver examination, and who has not committed any offense which requires the suspension,
35 revocation, or cancellation of the instruction permit, may reapply for a new instruction permit under
36 §17B-2-6 of this code. The division shall immediately revoke the permit upon receipt of a second
37 conviction for a moving violation of traffic regulations and laws of the road or violation of the terms
38 and conditions of a level one instruction permit, which convictions have become final unless a
39 greater penalty is required by this section or any other provision of this code. Any person whose
40 instruction permit has been revoked is disqualified from retesting for a period of 90 days. However,
41 after the expiration of 90 days, the person may retest if otherwise eligible. A holder of a level one
42 instruction permit who is under the age of 18 years may not use a wireless communication device
43 while operating a motor vehicle, unless the use of the wireless communication device is for
44 contacting a 9-1-1 system. In addition to all other provisions of this code for which a driver's

45 license may be restricted, suspended, revoked, or canceled, the holder of a level one instruction
46 permit may only operate a motor vehicle under the following conditions:

47 (A) The permit holder is under the direct supervision of a licensed driver, 21 years of age
48 or older, or a driver's education or driving school instructor who is acting in an official capacity as
49 an instructor, who is fully alert and unimpaired, and the only other occupant of the front seat. The
50 vehicle may be operated with no more than two additional passengers, unless the passengers
51 are family members;

52 (B) The permit holder is operating the vehicle between the hours of 5 a.m. and 10 p.m.;

53 (C) All occupants use safety belts in accordance with §17C-15-49 of this code;

54 (D) The permit holder is operating the vehicle without any measurable blood alcohol
55 content, in accordance with §17C-5-2(h) of this code; and

56 (E) The permit holder maintains current school enrollment and is making satisfactory
57 academic progress or otherwise shows compliance with §18-8-11 of this code: *Provided*, That a
58 person may otherwise be eligible for a restricted license or instruction permit pursuant to §18-8-
59 11.

60 (F) Any vehicle operated by a permit holder shall display a student driver sign that
61 complies with the requirements of subsection (g) of this section.

62 (d) *Level two intermediate driver's license.* — An applicant 16 years of age or older,
63 meeting all other requirements of this code, may be issued a level two intermediate driver's
64 license.

65 (1) *Eligibility.* — The division may not issue a level two intermediate driver's license unless
66 the applicant:

67 (A) Presents a completed application as prescribed in §17B-2-6 of this code;

68 (B) Has held the level one instruction permit conviction-free for the 180 days immediately
69 preceding the date of application for a level two intermediate license;

70 (C) Has completed either a driver's education course approved by the State Department
71 of Education or 50 hours of behind-the-wheel driving experience, including a minimum of 10 hours
72 of night time driving, certified by a parent or legal guardian or other responsible adult over the age
73 of 21 as indicated on the form prescribed by the division: *Provided*, That nothing in this paragraph
74 may be construed to require any school or any county board of education to provide any particular
75 number of driver's education courses or to provide driver's education training to any student;

76 (D) Passes the road skills examination as prescribed by §17B-2-7 of this code; and

77 ~~(E)~~ (F) Pays a fee of \$7.50 for one attempt. The Division of Motor Vehicles may adjust this
78 fee every five years on September 1, based on the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor
79 Statistics most current Consumer Price Index: *Provided*, That an increase in the fee may not
80 exceed 10 percent of the total fee amount in a single year.

81 (2) *Terms and conditions of a level two intermediate driver's license.* — A level two
82 intermediate driver's license issued under the provisions of this section expires 30 days after the
83 applicant attains the age of 18, or until the licensee qualifies for a level three full Class E license,
84 whichever comes first. A holder of a level two intermediate driver's license who is under the age
85 of 18 years shall not use a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle, unless
86 the use of the wireless communication device is for contacting a 9-1-1 system. In addition to all
87 other provisions of this code for which a driver's license may be restricted, suspended, revoked,
88 or canceled, the holder of a level two intermediate driver's license may only operate a motor
89 vehicle under the following conditions:

90 (A) The licensee operates a vehicle unsupervised between the hours of 5 a.m. and 10
91 p.m.;

92 (B) The licensee operates a vehicle only under the direct supervision of a licensed driver,
93 age 21 years or older, between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. except when the licensee is going
94 to or returning from:

95 (i) Lawful employment;

96 (ii) A school-sanctioned activity;

97 (iii) A religious event; or

98 (iv) An emergency situation that requires the licensee to operate a motor vehicle to prevent
99 bodily injury or death of another;

100 (C) All occupants of the vehicle use safety belts in accordance with §17C-15-49 of this
101 code;

102 (D) For the first six months after issuance of a level two intermediate driver's license, the
103 licensee may not operate a motor vehicle carrying any passengers less than 20 years old, unless
104 these passengers are family members of the licensee; for the second six months after issuance
105 of a level two intermediate driver's license, the licensee may not operate a motor vehicle carrying
106 more than one passenger less than 20 years old, unless these passengers are family members
107 of the licensee;

108 (E) The licensee operates a vehicle without any measurable blood alcohol content in
109 accordance with §17C-5-2(h) of this code;

110 (F) The licensee maintains current school enrollment and is making satisfactory academic
111 progress or otherwise shows compliance with §18-8-11 of this code: *Provided*, That a person may
112 otherwise be eligible for a restricted license or instruction permit pursuant to §18-8-11;

113 (G) Upon the first conviction for a moving traffic violation or a violation of §17B-2-3a(d)(2)
114 of this code of the terms and conditions of a level two intermediate driver's license, the licensee
115 shall enroll in an approved driver improvement program unless a greater penalty is required by
116 this section or by any other provision of this code; and

117 At the discretion of the commissioner, completion of an approved driver improvement
118 program may be used to negate the effect of a minor traffic violation as defined by the
119 commissioner against the one-year conviction-free driving criteria for early eligibility for a level
120 three driver's license and may also negate the effect of one minor traffic violation for purposes of
121 avoiding a second conviction under §17B-2-3a(d)(2)(G) of this code; and

122 (H) Upon the second conviction for a moving traffic violation or a violation of the terms and
123 conditions of the level two intermediate driver's license, the Division of Motor Vehicles shall revoke
124 or suspend the licensee's privilege to operate a motor vehicle for the applicable statutory period
125 or until the licensee's 18th birthday, whichever is longer, unless a greater penalty is required by
126 this section or any other provision of this code. Any person whose driver's license has been
127 revoked as a level two intermediate driver, upon reaching the age of 18 years and if otherwise
128 eligible, may reapply for an instruction permit, then a driver's license in accordance with §17B-2-
129 5, §17B-2-6, and §17B-2-7 of this code; and

130 (I) Any vehicle operated by a holder of the level two intermediate driver's license shall
131 display a student driver sign that complies with the requirements of subsection (g) of this section.

132 (e) *Level three, full Class E license.* — The level three license is valid until 30 days after
133 the date the licensee attains his or her 21st birthday. A holder of a level three driver's license who
134 is under the age of 18 years shall not use a wireless communication device while operating a
135 motor vehicle, unless the use of the wireless communication device is for contacting a 9-1-1
136 system. Unless otherwise provided in this section or any other section of this code, the holder of
137 a level three full Class E license is subject to the same terms and conditions as the holder of a
138 regular Class E driver's license.

139 A level two intermediate licensee whose privilege to operate a motor vehicle has not been
140 suspended, revoked, or otherwise canceled and who meets all other requirements of the code
141 may be issued a level three full Class E license without further examination or road skills testing
142 if the licensee:

- 143 (1) Has reached the age of 17 years;
- 144 (2) Presents a completed application as prescribed by §17B-2-6 of this code;
- 145 (3) Has held the level two intermediate license conviction free for the 12-month period
146 immediately preceding the date of the application;

147 (4) Has completed any driver improvement program required under §17B-2-3a(d)(2)(G) of
148 this code; and

149 (5) Pays a fee of \$2.50 for each year the license is valid. An additional fee of 50 cents
150 shall be collected to be deposited in the Combined Voter Registration and Driver's Licensing Fund
151 established in §3-2-12 of this code.

152 (f) A person violating the provisions of the terms and conditions of a level one instruction
153 permit, level two intermediate driver's license, or level three license is guilty of a misdemeanor
154 and, upon conviction thereof, shall for the first offense be fined \$25; for a second offense be fined
155 \$50; and for a third or subsequent offense be fined \$75. Notwithstanding any other section of this
156 code, no costs or fees, other than the fees set forth in this subsection, may be assessed against
157 a person charged solely with violating paragraph (F), subdivision (2), subsection (c) of this section
158 or paragraph (I), subdivision (2), subsection (d) of this section for the first offense.

159 (g) The student driver sign may be a magnet, sticker, or banner and shall be on a reflective,
160 caution yellow background, and contain the words Student Driver in black lettering not smaller
161 than 1.5 inches tall in size. The sign shall be clearly visible to drivers approaching the vehicle from
162 the rear. The Division of Motor Vehicles may provide such a sign to level one permit holders and
163 level two licensees, and it may provide persons with information on where appropriate signs may
164 be purchased.

165 (h) The amendments to this section made during the regular session of the Legislature,
166 2023, shall expire five years from the effective date of the amendments.