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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
and Drafting

Legislative Budget
Office

H.B. 411
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Lorenz and Hoops

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SUMMARY

- Lowers the age at which a juvenile may obtain a temporary instruction permit from 15½ to 15.
- Expands the time a juvenile must hold a temporary instruction permit before eligibility for a probationary license from six months to one year (thus retaining age 16 as the age of eligibility for a probationary driver's license).
- Requires the classroom instruction portion of driver's education courses to include instruction on defensive driving techniques.
- Alters the penalties for certain first-time juvenile traffic offenders.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Background

Under current law, a minor person (under 18) is eligible for a probationary driver's license (probationary license) at age 16, provided the minor meets certain conditions. A probationary license is like a regular driver's license, but the licensee is subject to special curfews (between midnight and 6 a.m.) and vehicle occupancy restrictions (may only transport one nonfamily member unless a parent, guardian, or custodian is present).¹ The conditions for obtaining a probationary license include:

¹ R.C. 4507.071. The probationary license is valid until the age of 18, at which point it automatically becomes a regular driver's license.

1. The minor must first apply for and obtain a temporary instruction permit (permit) by passing both a written test about motor vehicle laws² and a vision screening test;³
2. The minor must be at least 15½ to obtain the permit and must hold the permit for at least six months. (Thus, the earliest the minor may obtain a probationary license is age 16.)
3. The minor's application for a permit must be signed by one of the following:
 - a. The minor applicant's parents;
 - b. The minor applicant's guardian;
 - c. Another person having custody of the minor applicant; or
 - d. A responsible person who is willing to assume liability for any negligence or willful or wanton misconduct by the minor applicant while driving.⁴
4. During the term of the permit, the minor must complete an approved driver's education or training course (which must include at least 24 hours of classroom instruction and eight hours of behind-the-wheel instruction), acquire at least 50 hours of driving experience (including at least ten night hours),⁵ and pass a driving test (maneuverability and road skills).⁶

A temporary instruction permit is valid for one year.⁷

Temporary instruction permit: age lowered and validity extension

The bill lowers the age at which a minor may obtain a temporary instruction permit from 15½ to 15. It also requires the minor to hold the permit for one year, instead of six months, before obtaining a probationary license. Thus, the bill retains the earliest possible age (16) at which a minor may obtain a probationary license, but also extends the time that certain probationary license curfews and occupancy restrictions apply. Additionally, the bill extends a permit's validity period from one year to one year and six months.⁸

The diagrams below illustrate this change:

² R.C. 4507.10(A) and 4507.11, not in the bill.

³ Ohio Administrative Code (O.A.C.) 4501:1-1-08(A).

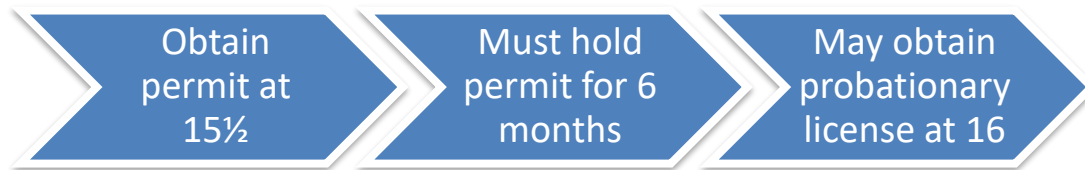
⁴ R.C. 4507.05 and 4507.071; R.C. 4507.07(A), not in the bill.

⁵ R.C. 4507.21(B) and 4508.02(C), not in the bill.

⁶ R.C. 4507.10(A) and 4507.11, not in the bill; O.A.C. 4501:1-1-10.

⁷ R.C. 4507.05.

⁸ R.C. 4507.05(A) and (C) and 4507.071(A).

Current law**The bill****Defensive driving training**

The bill requires the Director of Public Safety to include defensive driver techniques for new drivers as a part of the classroom portion of drivers education courses. Such instruction applies to both in-person classroom instruction and online instruction courses. Specifically, defensive driver techniques include instruction related to all the following:

- Weather conditions, including rain, fog, hail, sleet, snow, and high winds;
- Adverse road conditions, including potholes, road debris, construction, and road detours;
- Road hazards caused by animals, including animals that enter the roadway unexpectedly;
- Incidents involving road rage, speeding, reckless driving, erratic driving, and other aggressive driving behaviors; and
- Incidents during which the motor vehicle skids, slides, or otherwise moves in an uncontrolled manner.

Current law includes classroom or online instruction on the dangers of driving a motor vehicle in violation of Ohio's Distracted Driving Law and OVI (operating a vehicle impaired) Law.⁹

Juvenile traffic offenders

The bill allows a first-time juvenile traffic offender the option to enroll in an advanced juvenile driver improvement program in lieu of paying standard fines and receiving points against the juvenile's license.¹⁰ The option to enroll in the program is available if the juvenile's first traffic offense would have been a minor misdemeanor if committed by an adult. If the juvenile elects

⁹ R.C. 4508.02(C).

¹⁰ R.C. 2152.20 and 2152.21.

to participate in the program, the juvenile traffic offender must submit a certificate of completion to the court in order to have any fines or license points waived.

The advance juvenile improvement program requires a minimum of two hours of classroom instruction that focuses on driving physics, vehicle dynamics, proper vision techniques, and teen driver statistics. In addition, the program requires a minimum of four hours of emergency driving skills development through “behind-the-wheel” driving exercises that focus on vehicle control in inclement weather, emergency transition maneuvers, and spin and skid control.¹¹

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	08-07-25

ANHB0411In-136/ts

¹¹ R.C. 4510.311(B).