



OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Bill Analysis

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H.B. 548*

132nd General Assembly

(As Reported by H. Transportation and Public Safety)

Reps. McClain, Becker, Thompson, Hood, Hambley, Riedel, Dean, Wiggam, Retherford, Seitz, Lipps

BILL SUMMARY

- Permits a person to wear earplugs for hearing protection while operating a motorcycle.
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CONTENT AND OPERATION

Use of earplugs while operating a motorcycle

The bill permits a person to wear earplugs for hearing protection while the person is operating a motorcycle.¹ Under current law, a person is prohibited from wearing earphones over, or earplugs in, both ears while operating any motor vehicle, including a motorcycle, except in specified circumstances.²

Current exceptions

The prohibition against using earphones and earplugs while operating a motor vehicle currently does not apply to any of the following:

- (1) Any person wearing a hearing aid;
- (2) Law enforcement personnel while on duty;

* This analysis was prepared before the report of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee appeared in the House Journal. Note that the list of co-sponsors and the legislative history may be incomplete.

¹ R.C. 4511.84(B)(6).

² R.C. 4511.84(A).

(3) Fire department personnel and emergency medical service personnel while on duty;

(4) Any person engaged in the operation of equipment for use in the maintenance or repair of any highway; and

(5) Any person engaged in the operation of refuse collection equipment.³

Penalties

Current law, unchanged by the bill, specifies that wearing earphones or earplugs while operating a motor vehicle, unless a person falls under one of the exceptions, is a minor misdemeanor. If within one year of the offense, the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to one additional predicate motor vehicle or traffic offense, the offender is guilty of a fourth degree misdemeanor. If within one year of the offense, the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to two or more predicate motor vehicle offenses, the offender is guilty of a third degree misdemeanor. In any instance, the offense is considered a strict liability offense.⁴

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	03-13-18
Reported, H. Transportation and Public Safety	---

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³ R.C. 4511.84(B).

⁴ R.C. 4511.84(C).

