

Alaska Legislature

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Sponsor Statement - House Bill 212

"An Act relating to requirements for persons holding provisional drivers' licenses."

The Alaska Graduated License Program is a three-step program designed to develop safe driving habits as well as slowly introduce young drivers to the Alaskan road system. One of the steps in the program is graduating from an Instructional Permit to a Provisional License. There are some restrictions that follow having a Provisional License. Some examples are; You may not carry passengers unless one of the passengers is a person at least 21 years of age, You may carry passengers under the age of 21 only if they are your siblings, and you may not operate a motor vehicle between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless accompanied by a person at least 21 years of age. Even though these restrictions are in place for young drivers, many choose to ignore these limitations that are there to provide safety to them and other Alaskans.

Every year, teen drivers account for about 20 percent of the fatalities and major injuries that occur on Alaskan roads and highways. Many teen drivers fail to comply with the rules of the Graduated License Program. This is a problem that many schools in Alaska's urban school districts face. Teen drivers with their provisional license will take other passengers from their schools and choose not to abide by this law. This is not only a problem in the schools', but across Alaska in general.

In order to reduce the number of accidents caused by teen drivers, and to provide safety to Alaskan roads, a solution to this problem would be to issue a sticker with each Provisional License and to place the sticker in the rear window of a motor vehicle that is being operated by a Provisional License driver. This sticker would make other drivers aware that there is a newly licensed driver on the road, and it would assist law enforcement officers with identifying teen drivers who are breaking the law. The House State Affairs Committee amended the bill to specify that failure to display the sticker is not a primary offense.

The Alaska Department of Motor Vehicles will determine the design of the sticker, and the licensee will pay the cost.

HB 212 was passed by the House State Affairs Committee on Tuesday, March 13, 2012. It now goes before the House Transportation and Finance Committees. For more information, contact Rep. Millett at (907) 465-3879.