



Specifically, the bill would:

- Require that autocycles be registered as motorcycles and allow proof of financial responsibility to characterize them as motorcycles
- Allow operation without a motorcycle endorsement
- Define “autocycle” to mean a three-wheeled motorcycle on which the driver and all passengers ride in a completely enclosed, tandem seating area, that is equipped with a federal motor vehicle safety standard 571.205 glazing, roll cage, safety belts for all occupants, airbag protection and antilock brakes and that is designed to be controlled with a steering wheel and pedals
- Includes autocycles in the definition of motorcycle
- Exempt a person operating an autocycle from riding only upon the permanent regular seat attached thereto, and having the person’s feet upon the footrests provided on the machine
- Exempt a person riding an autocycle from being required to ride on a permanent and regular seat or having the person’s feet upon footrests
- Exempt a person operating an autocycle from having an eye protective device if the autocycle does not have a fixed windshield
- Permit a person under the age of 18 to operate an autocycle without using a securely fastened safety helmet as well passengers.
- Permit a dealer or person who leases or rents an autocycle to lease or rent a motorcycle to a person under the age eighteen without showing a valid driver’s license or permit

## **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

The bill carries no appropriation and there is minimal, but net positive, fiscal impact. MVD will likely receive additional registration and licensing fees from the introduction of autocycles. This is likely to be minimal, since MVD reports they “have been around since at least 1975,” though appear to be being marketed anew and produced by new companies.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

Autocycles are a new type of vehicle that differ from 3-wheeled motorcycles in that the driver uses a steering wheel rather than handlebars to direct the vehicle, and operators in an autocycle sit in a seat rather than straddling or sitting astride the vehicle.

Various types of three-wheeled vehicles are being manufactured. This bill only defines some of these vehicles as “autocycles.” There are several designs for autocycles, some of which do not meet the definition used in the bill.

Although HB 65 defines an “autocycle” as having seatbelts, autocycle operators (and their passengers) would not be required to use a seat belt. The bill also exempts autocycles from the seating and helmet requirements that otherwise apply to motorcycles. Further it specifies that a motorcycle endorsement is not required for autocycle operation, although autocycles are to be registered as motorcycles. Those under the age of 18 who might wish to rent or lease a motorcycle would not be required to show either a valid driver’s license or permit.

DOH analysis states that “Since most autocycles are much lighter and less stable than most cars, operators and passengers would be at increased risk of injury, particularly without the requirement of the demonstrated evidence-based practice of seatbelt use.”

A 15-page report from the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators titled “Best Practices for the Regulation of Three-Wheel Vehicles” (October 2013) may be found here: <http://www.aamva.org/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=4629&libID=4606>

The report states (p.2) that “Most three-wheel vehicles clearly meet the definition of a motorcycle in United States code 49 CFR 571.3(b) and should be regulated as motorcycles.”

The report also states (p.2) that:

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) had identified issues with vehicles such as auto cycles. Auto cycles may have bodies that surround the passenger, and their overall appearance is similar to that of passenger cars. Passenger cars have to meet crash tests and provide an established level of safety to occupants. Auto cycles do not have to meet these standards because they are motorcycles and must meet the safety standards established for motorcycles. The public may not be aware of these differences and may have a false sense of safety when choosing a vehicle.

The report also recommends (p. 5) that a regular passenger car license should be required to operate an auto cycle. It also recommends collection of specific safety statistics on auto cycles as detailed information on their safety is needed.

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

According to a report issued by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in February 2014 titled “Traffic Safety Trends State Legislative Action 2013,” states that laws passed in Michigan, Louisiana, California, Nevada and South Carolina do not require a separate endorsement for an auto cycle. Louisiana’s law does not require use of safety helmets in auto cycle that meet or exceed standards for a safety helmet or roll cage, but does require drivers to hold a valid driver’s license.

## **AMENDMENTS**

DOH analysis suggests the bill be amended to include the requirement to wear seatbelts.

CAC/bb/je