

**Bill Analysis and Fiscal Impact Report
Taxation and Revenue Department**

February 6, 2025

Bill:
SB-73

Sponsor:
Senators Heather Berghmans and Antoinette Sedillo Lopez and Representative Cristina Parajón

Short Title:
Driver Education

Description:
This bill amends the motor vehicle code to require additional driver education related to “vulnerable road users”, which include pedestrians, persons riding or leading an animal, or driving a means of transportation not surrounded by a shell of protection – such as a bicycle or motorcycle.

A new requirement for at least three hours of education and training on driving with vulnerable road users will be required for persons under the age of 18, applying for their first New Mexico driver’s license, as a part of a driver education course.

The bill maintains the requirement of at least two hours of driving while intoxicated (DWI) prevention and education training in addition to the new requirement of three hours of education and training on driving with vulnerable road users. It also adds language allowing the Department of Transportation (DOT) Traffic Safety Bureau to prescribe minimum driver education and training program standards.

Effective Date, Applicability, and Contingency Language:
January 1, 2027

Taxation and Revenue Department Analyst:
Htet Wint and Sean Bulian – Motor Vehicle Division

Methodology for Estimated Revenue Impact:
None.

Policy Issues:
New Mexico’s bicycling safety rankings places as one of the more dangerous states for cyclists and is ranked the worst for pedestrian fatalities in the nation. Requiring driver education and training on vulnerable road users increases safety by improving awareness, reducing risky behaviors such as speeding and close passing, and promoting better interaction, leading to fewer serious crashes and greater equity for all road users.

Technical Issues:
None.

Other Issues:
None.

Administrative & Compliance Impact:
DOT establishes and oversees driver education standards and curriculum requirements, while MVD is responsible for testing applicants and issuing driver’s licenses based on those DOT standards. Private driver education schools deliver the DOT-approved curriculum to students and must comply with DOT requirements.

This bill will require the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) to update its driver’s license knowledge test content to ensure the test aligns with the expanded driver education curriculum changes to be implemented by the DOT Traffic Safety Bureau.

DOT’s driver education manual defines the instructional content and learning objectives that must be taught by private driver education schools. MVD’s Driver’s Manual is used for licensing purposes and serves as the primary source for the knowledge test administered by MVD. When DOT updates or expands its curriculum and instructional manual, MVD must review and update its own Driver’s Manual and corresponding knowledge test questions to ensure consistency between what applicants are taught, what is published for licensing, and what is assessed during the examination process.

As part of these updates, MVD will provide alternative language translations for any new testing material and updates will be made to the MVD online driver manual to clearly define “vulnerable road user”.

MVD staff will be trained on the updates to the online driver manual as it relates to vulnerable road users and become familiar with the revised test curriculum and driver education completion forms.

Implementation of this bill will have a moderate impact on Tax & Rev’s Information Technology Division (ITD). The estimated time to develop, test and implement the changes is approximately 640 hours or 4 months for an estimated \$44,294 of staff workload cost. This bill requires changes to the Tapestry system’s knowledge exams to include content on driving safely around vulnerable road users. Application and configuration changes are required to add a new category of questions and answers and to pick random questions including those in the newly added category.

Estimated Additional Operating Budget Impact*

FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Recurring	Fund(s) or Agency Affected
-	\$44.3	-	\$44.3	NR	MVD Suspense Fund – Staff Workload Cost

* In thousands of dollars. Parentheses () indicate a revenue loss.

Related Bills:

None.