

Chapter 466

(Senate Bill 42)

AN ACT concerning

Vehicle Laws – Horse Riding – Helmet Requirement for Minors

FOR the purpose of prohibiting an adult from allowing certain minors to ride a horse on certain property unless the minor is wearing a helmet that meets certain standards; and generally relating to helmet requirements and horse riding.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Transportation
Section 11–101 and 11–127
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Transportation
Section 21–104
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Transportation

11–101.

In the Maryland Vehicle Law, the following words have the meanings indicated, unless the context requires otherwise.

11–127.

“Highway” means:

(1) The entire width between the boundary lines of any way or thoroughfare of which any part is used by the public for vehicular travel, whether or not the way or thoroughfare has been dedicated to the public and accepted by any proper authority; and

(2) For purposes of the application of State laws, the entire width between the boundary lines of any way or thoroughfare used for purposes of vehicular travel on any property owned, leased, or controlled by the United States government and located in the State.

21-104.

(a) Every person riding an animal or driving an animal-drawn vehicle on a roadway has all the rights granted to and is subject to all the duties required of the driver of a vehicle by this title, except for those provisions of this title that by their very nature cannot apply.

(b) (1) Except in Charles, Worcester, and St. Mary's counties, or as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, a person may not ride an animal or drive an animal-drawn vehicle on:

(i) Any divided highway where the posted maximum speed limit is more than 35 miles per hour; or

(ii) Any controlled access highway.

(2) In Anne Arundel County, a person may ride an animal on any part of a highway described in paragraph (1) of this subsection, other than on its roadway or shoulder.

(C) (1) IN THIS SUBSECTION, "HORSE" INCLUDES DONKEYS, MULES, AND PONIES.

(2) (I) SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, THIS SUBSECTION APPLIES ONLY TO HORSE RIDING ON:

1. A HIGHWAY;

2. A PUBLIC HORSE-RIDING PATH OR TRAIL; OR

3. THE GROUNDS OF A FACILITY ~~THAT~~:

A. WHOSE PRIMARY PURPOSE IS EQUESTRIAN ACTIVITIES; AND

B. THAT SOLICITS OR OFFERS TO THE PUBLIC RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, THERAPEUTIC, OR COMPETITIVE EQUESTRIAN ACTIVITIES.

(II) THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A MINOR WHO IS:

1. CROSSING A PUBLIC HIGHWAY THAT SEPARATES PRIVATELY OWNED LAND;

2. ENGAGED IN AN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE OR PURSUIT; ~~OR~~
3. A MEMBER OF AN AMISH OR A MENNONITE COMMUNITY; OR
4. RECEIVING THERAPY SERVICES FROM A LICENSED MEDICAL PROVIDER AND FOR WHOM THE USE OF AN ALTERNATIVE HELMET IS NECESSARY, APPROPRIATE, AND IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP INTERNATIONAL'S GUIDELINES FOR ALTERNATIVE HELMET USE.

(3) AN ADULT WHO IS PRESENT AND DIRECTLY SUPERVISING A MINOR MAY NOT ALLOW THE MINOR TO RIDE A HORSE UNLESS THE MINOR IS WEARING A PROPERLY SECURED HELMET THAT MEETS OR EXCEEDS THE STANDARDS OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TESTING AND MATERIALS FOR PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR USED IN EQUESTRIAN RIDING.

(4) A VIOLATION OF THIS SUBSECTION INVOLVING AN ADULT SUPERVISING MULTIPLE MINORS AT THE SAME TIME SHALL BE TREATED AS A SINGLE VIOLATION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, May 9, 2024.