

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 471

(Senator Rosapepe)

Judicial Proceedings

Vehicle Laws - Motor Vehicle Administration - 3-Hour Roadway Safety Driving Education Program

This bill establishes a three-hour Roadway Safety Driving Education Program. The program must provide instruction on (1) understanding signs, signals, and pavement markings; (2) dangerous driving behaviors; (3) work zone safety; (4) the hazards of driving while impaired or intoxicated; (5) the criminal penalties and administrative sanctions for alcohol- and drug-related motor vehicle violations; (6) the medical, biological, and psychological effects of the consumption of alcohol and drugs and their impact on the operation of a motor vehicle; (7) the Maryland driving record and points systems; and (8) any other roadway safety-related information that the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) determines would be beneficial to applicants for a driver's license. The program established by the bill replaces an existing alcohol education program, which already covers certain topics specified in the bill. The bill also makes other conforming changes (*i.e.*, by substituting references to the alcohol education program under current statutory provisions with the three-hour Roadway Safety Driving Education Program established by the bill).

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by approximately \$9,300 in FY 2026 only for the Judiciary to make reprogramming changes. MVA can implement the bill's requirements with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: MVA may issue a driver's license, without first issuing a learner's instructional permit and without a waiting period, to any individual who (1) has been licensed regularly to drive in Maryland, in another state or country, or by the armed forces of the United States, if MVA is satisfied that the applicant's experience in driving vehicles of the type that would be authorized by the license class applied for is sufficient to justify issuance of the license without further training or (2) has successfully completed the basic motorcycle safety course. MVA may examine the applicant's driving record or issue a provisional license (if appropriate). An individual who never held a driver's license issued by MVA (or by another state), but who otherwise may obtain a license without first obtaining a learner's instructional permit, must successfully complete a three-hour alcohol and drug education program established by MVA.

Driver Improvement and Alcohol Education Programs

MVA may conduct (1) a driver improvement program (DIP), including a DIP designed specifically for young drivers and (2) an alcohol education program. The purpose of these programs is to provide driver rehabilitation. MVA must determine the content of the programs.

If an individual is convicted of one or more moving violations, after an administrative hearing, as a condition of reinstatement of a driver's license, MVA may require an individual to attend a DIP or alcohol education program. A court may impose the same requirements. In carrying out an order of the court, a probation officer or health department officer may assign an individual to attend a DIP or alcohol education program.

An individual who attends a program must pay, in advance, a fee set by MVA.

MVA may waive attendance at an alcohol education program if an individual attends a private alcohol education program or a program provided by a political subdivision of the State that is approved by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and MVA. MVA must establish criteria for approving private providers of alcohol education or DIPs provided by a political subdivision. Upon application for approval to provide the programs allowed by these provisions, a private provider must pay an application fee established by MVA.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education

MVA, in cooperation with MDH, must establish an alcohol and drug education program to educate certain driver's license applicants (*i.e.*, applicants who are qualified to receive a driver's license without first being issued a learner's instructional permit, as noted above).

The program must also be included as part of the driver education program. The program must provide three hours of instruction in:

- the hazards of driving while impaired or intoxicated;
- the criminal penalties and administrative sanctions for alcohol- and drug-related motor vehicle violations;
- the medical, biological, and psychological effects of the consumption of alcohol and drugs and their impact on the operation of a motor vehicle; and
- any other drug- and alcohol-related information that MVA determines would be beneficial to applicants for a driver's license.

MVA must adopt regulations establishing criteria for certifying a private entity to offer the alcohol and drug education program.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 463 (Delegates Edelson and Watson) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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