

Committee Substitute for
Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 52

An act relating to driver's licenses; amending s. 322.18, F.S.; requiring vision tests for certain applicants for license renewal; prohibiting those applicants from renewing by telephone or electronic means; requiring the department to study the effects of aging on driving ability; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Effective January 1, 2004, subsection (5) of section 322.18, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

322.18 Original applications, licenses, and renewals; expiration of licenses; delinquent licenses.—

(5) All renewal driver's licenses may be issued after the applicant license has been determined to be eligible by the department.

(a) A licensee who is otherwise eligible for renewal and who is over 79 years of age:

1. Must submit to and pass a vision test administered at any driver's license office; or

2. If the licensee applies for an extension by mail as provided in subsection (8), must submit to a vision test administered by a physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459, or an optometrist licensed under chapter 463, must send the results of that test to the department on a form obtained from the department and signed by such health care practitioner, and must meet vision standards that are equivalent to the standards for passing the departmental vision test. The physician or optometrist may submit the results of a vision test by a department-approved electronic means.

(b) A licensee who is over 79 years of age may not submit an application for extension under subsection (8) by electronic or telephonic means, unless the results of a vision test have been electronically submitted in advance by the physician or optometrist.

Section 2. (1) The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles shall study the effects of aging on driving ability. The purpose of the study is to develop a comprehensive approach to licensing drivers.

(2) Issues to be studied by the department shall include the:

(a) Effective and efficient identification of drivers at risk of being involved in a motor vehicle accident because of functional limitations that effect their driving ability;

(b) Prevalence and effect of degenerative processes affecting vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive functions and reaction time;

(c) Implementation and effect of the department's vision screening requirements and examination of new technologies;

(d) Availability and effectiveness of remedial measures such as skills training, adaptive equipment, physical therapy and adjustment of driving practices that will allow people to drive safely for as long as possible;

(e) Availability of alternative forms of transportation for people who can no longer safely drive; and

(f) Effectiveness of existing public education initiatives relating to at-risk drivers.

(3) The department shall report the results of the study to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by February 1, 2004. The report shall include findings of the study and recommendations for improving the safety of at-risk drivers.

(4) The department shall appoint an advisory council to participate in the study and to advise the department on issues related to older at-risk drivers on an ongoing basis. The council shall be known as the Florida At-Risk Driver Council. Members of the council shall include representatives of organizations involved with issues facing older drivers including state agencies, medical professionals, senior citizen advocacy groups, providers of services to senior citizens, and research entities.

Section 3. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this act, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor July 11, 2003.

Filed in Office Secretary of State July 11, 2003.