

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2019 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 475

BY SENATORS SYPOLT AND FACEMIRE

[Introduced January 30, 2019; Referred
to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; and
then to the Committee on the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §17C-15-44 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended,
2 relating to permitting persons who are 21 years of age or older to operate or be a
3 passenger on a motorcycle without a helmet if they have held a license valid for the
4 operation of a motorcycle for a minimum of two years; and making a technical correction.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 15. EQUIPMENT.

§17C-15-44. Safety equipment and requirements for motorcyclists, motorcycles, motor-driven cycles and mopeds. ~~motorcycle safety standards and education committee~~

1 (a) No person under the age of 21 may operate or be a passenger on any motorcycle or
2 motor-driven cycle unless the person is wearing securely fastened on his or her head by either a
3 neck or chin strap a protective helmet designed to deflect blows, resist penetration and spread
4 impact forces. Any helmet worn by an operator or passenger shall meet the current performance
5 specifications established by the American National Standards Institute Standard, Z 90.1, the
6 United States Department of Transportation Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 218 or
7 Snell Safety Standards for Protective Headgear for Vehicle Users.

8 (b) Persons aged 21 years and older may operate or be a passenger on a motorcycle or
9 motor-driven cycle without a helmet if they have held a license valid for the operation of a
10 motorcycle for a minimum of two years.

11 ~~(b)~~ (c) No person may operate or be a passenger on any motorcycle or motor-driven cycle
12 unless the person is wearing safety, shatter-resistant eyeglasses, excluding contact lenses, or
13 eye goggles or face shield that complies with the performance specifications established by the
14 American National Standards Institute for Head, Eye and Respiratory Protection, Z 2.1. In
15 addition, if any motorcycle, motor-driven cycle or moped is equipped with a windshield or
16 windscreen, the windshield or windscreen shall be constructed of safety, shatter-resistant material
17 that complies with the performance specifications established by Department of Transportation

18 Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 205 and American National Standards Institute,
19 Safety Glazing Materials for Glazing Motor Vehicles Operated on Land Highways, Standard Z
20 26.1.

21 ~~(e)~~ (d) No person may operate a motorcycle, motor-driven cycle or moped on which the
22 handlebars or grips are more than 15 inches higher than the uppermost part of the operator's seat
23 when the seat is not depressed in any manner.

24 ~~(d)~~ (e) A person operating a motorcycle, motor-driven cycle or moped shall ride in a seated
25 position facing forward and only upon a permanent operator's seat attached to the vehicle. No
26 operator may carry any other person nor may any other person ride on the vehicle unless the
27 vehicle is designed to carry more than one person, in which event a passenger may ride behind
28 the operator upon the permanent operator's seat if it is designed for two persons, or upon another
29 seat firmly attached to the vehicle to the rear of the operator's seat and equipped with footrests
30 designed and located for use by the passenger or in a sidecar firmly attached to the vehicle. No
31 person may ride side saddle on a seat. An operator may carry as many passengers as there are
32 seats and footrests to accommodate those passengers. Additional passengers may be carried in
33 a factory-produced sidecar provided that there is one passenger per seat. Passengers riding in a
34 sidecar shall be restrained by safety belts.

35 ~~(e)~~ (f) Every motorcycle, motor-driven cycle and moped shall be equipped with a rearview
36 mirror affixed to the handlebars or fairings and adjusted so that the operator has a clear view of
37 the road and condition of traffic behind him or her for a distance of at least 200 feet.

38 ~~(f)~~ (g) Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, a person with a valid
39 driver's license who is operating a fully enclosed auticycle, as defined in §17C-1-69 of this code,
40 is exempt from the provisions of this section.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to permit persons who are 21 years of age or older to operate or be a passenger on a motorcycle without a helmet if they have held a license valid for the operation of a motorcycle for a minimum of two years. The bill also makes a

technical correction in the section heading.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.