

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

FILE NUMBER: H.F. 3575

DATE: March 13, 2008

Version: Second Engrossment

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Subject: School bus driver requirements

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Overview

This bill creates new regulations and requirements for type A-I and type III school bus drivers.

Section

- 1 **Personal cellular phone call prohibition.** Modifies a prohibition on making personal calls with a cell phone when operating a school bus, to include type III school buses.
- 2 **School bus.** Modifies the definition of “school bus” to include type III buses in the chapter on driving while impaired, which bans drug or alcohol use when operating a school bus.
- 3 **Exception for type III school bus drivers.** Establishes new requirements for operating a type III school bus. Type III school buses are passenger cars, station wagons, vans, and certain lighter weight buses, and can be school district, busing company, or employee-owned. They cannot be identified as a school bus on the outside. Under current law, the vehicles can be operated without a school bus endorsement and few other requirements apply.

Requirements added in the bill include:

- the vehicle operator is an employee of the owner or lessor of the vehicle;
- annual training by the driver’s employer, which includes certain specified

Section

items;

- a background check;
- a physical examination;
- the employers has a mandatory drug testing program;
- annual verification of the driver's license (which is already required under current law if regularly transporting students);
- prohibition on operating a type III school bus for certain DWI related convictions, a felony offense, certain drug related violations (if it is not a petty misdemeanor), violation of certain prohibitions relating to minors, or a fourth moving violation;
- reporting to employers any conviction for the above offenses;
- certain training of students being transported;
- training of the students on riding school buses;
- annual certification that the requirements are being met, to be maintained by the school or business; and
- annual vehicle inspection by the State Patrol.

An employee of a school or school district who does not operate a type III school bus as part of the person's normal duties is exempt from the requirements of a background check, physical exam, drug testing, annual license verification, and employer notification on certain convictions (although the employee still could not drive a type III school bus if convicted of any of the listed offenses).

- 4 Rulemaking.** Authorizes the Department of Public Safety to promulgate rules governing type III school buses.