

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill modifies provisions governing work zones to: prohibit cell phone use in work zones when workers are present, set a \$300 fine amount for some traffic violations in work zones, allocate fine revenue to a new work zone safety account, appropriate account funds for work zone safety activities, permit stopping and citing drivers or owners of vehicles used in violation of traffic flagger directions, set a default 45 m.p.h. speed limit in some highway work zones when workers are present, and adjust the conditions when a workers present speed limit in a work zone can be established without an engineering study.

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- 1 Work zone.** Defines “work zone” in the chapter on traffic safety, to identify construction or maintenance work by a road authority (such as MnDOT, counties, and cities) along with at least one of some other conditions, such as a temporary work zone speed limit or lane closure.
- 2 Obedience to traffic-control signal or authorized persons; presumptions.** Eliminates a provision on traffic direction from flaggers, which is moved to a separate subdivision.
- 3 Obedience to work zone flagger; violation, penalty.** Sets a statutory fine amount of \$300 (not including a \$75 court surcharge or other fees) for a motorist who violates the directives of a traffic flagger in a work zone. Allocates the funds to a new work zone safety account (being created in section 6 of the bill).

Authorizes stopping and citing the driver of a vehicle operated in violation of flagger directions for up to four hours after the time of the violation. Provides for issuing a citation

Section

to the owner or lessor of a vehicle operated in violation of flagger directions, with exceptions and limitations.

- 4** **Speed limit in work zone when workers present.** Paragraphs (a) and (b) reduce the default speed limit to 45 m.p.h. in work zones when workers are present and at least one lane is closed, in cases where the usual speed limit is 50 m.p.h. or higher. Provides for situations in which the limit is not adjusted down, including if positive barriers are in place, the work takes place for under 24 hours, or if the limit has otherwise been adjusted.

Paragraphs (c) and (d) amend the requirements on when a workers present speed limit in a work zone can be set by a road authority without a traffic study. Under the change, speed limits can be reduced by no more than 20 miles per hour in a 55 m.p.h. or higher zone, and reduced by no more than 15 miles per hour in a 50 m.p.h. or lower zone.

Eliminates a provision that doubles the fine when a speeding violation occurs in certain work zones when workers are present, which is replaced with statutory fine amount in a separate subdivision. (Under current law, the amount of fine varies depending on the driver's speed.)

- 5** **Work zone speed limit violations.** Sets a statutory fine amount of \$300 (not including a \$75 court surcharge or other fees) for violating a speed limit and other speed related violations in a work zone. Allocates the funds to a new work zone safety account (being created in section 6 of the bill).

- 6** **[169.255] Work zone safety.**

Subd. 1. Work zone safety account; appropriation. Establishes a new work zone safety account (which receives some traffic fine funds), transfers \$28,000 annually to the general fund, and appropriates the remaining funds to the Minnesota Department of Transportation for enhanced traffic enforcement in work zones on state and local roads as well as for work zone safety education efforts.

Subd. 2. Legislative report. Requires an annual legislative report on uses of funds from the work zone safety account, impacts of enforcement on vehicle speeds, and effectiveness of efforts. It is first due October 1, 2015, and expires after the 2017 report.

- 7** **Prohibition on use; work zones.** Prohibits using a cell phone while operating a vehicle in a work zone, both in handheld and hands free modes, when workers are present.