

House Research Act Summary

CHAPTER: 356 (H.F. 3263)

SESSION: 2010 Regular Session

TOPIC: Traffic regulations: work zones, booster seats, and driver's manual

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Overview

This legislation modifies a couple areas of traffic regulations, pertaining to speed limits in highway work zones, child restraint use in school-related transportation, and new information to be conveyed in the driver's manual.

Section

1 Speed zoning in work zone; surcharge. Modifies speed limit adjustments in a work zone, to allow it to be set at no more than 40 m.p.h. on nondivided two-lane highways that have a regular speed limit of at least 60 m.p.h. The change resolves an internal conflict in the statute governing work zone speed limits.

2 Exceptions. Modifies the exemptions from a requirement that children under certain age and height thresholds must be secured in a child restraint system when being transported. The act exempts from the child restraint mandate (1) school buses, and (2) those type III vehicles that are manufactured to meet the federal occupant crash protection safety standards required of school buses. The provision is effective May 18, 2010.

Type III vehicles are certain kinds of motor vehicles used to transport pupils to or from school, or for school related activities. Type III vehicles primarily consist of passenger automobiles (like station wagons and SUVs), but the category can include a vehicle that is commonly considered a small school bus yet lacks some features unique to school buses. To qualify as a type III vehicle, it must:

- carry a maximum of ten or fewer people, including the driver; and
- weigh 10,000 pounds or less. Minn. Stat. § 169.011, subd. 71.

A child restraint is required to be used when transporting children in most motor vehicles equipped with seat belts if the child is both (1) under age eight, and (2) shorter than four feet nine inches in height. Use of child restraints remains a requirement when transporting such

children in a type III vehicle that is a regular passenger automobile, such as a minivan (which does not meet school bus occupant protection standards).

- 3 Driver's manual; restricted driving in left lane. Mandates that the next update to the driver's manual must cover circumstances of driving in the left- and right-hand lanes.