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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 3071

03/22/2023 Authored by Tabke, Stephenson, Norris and Kraft
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Transportation Finance and Policy
02/22/2024 Adoption of Report: Amended and re-referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to transportation; driver and vehicle services; requiring incorporation of
1.3 plain language standards for written driver's examinations; requiring a report;
1.4 appropriating money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 171.13, by
1.5 adding a subdivision.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 171.13, is amended by adding a subdivision
1.8 to read:

1.9 Subd. 10. Written examination plain language requirements. (a) For purposes of this
1.10 subdivision, the following terms have the meanings given:

1.11 (1) "committee" means the Department of Public Safety, Division of Driver and Vehicle
1.12 Services Test Maintenance Committee responsible for monitoring, reviewing, and editing
1.13 the written portion of the driver's knowledge examination on behalf of the Division of Driver
1.14 and Vehicle Services;

1.15 (2) "plain language standards" means the requirements specified in paragraph (b) and
1.16 the requirements of the Plain Writing Act, Public Law 111-274, and Executive Order 14-07;
1.17 and

1.18 (3) "written examination" means the written portion of the driver's knowledge examination
1.19 in English and administered under this section.

1.20 (b) By February 1, 2025, the commissioner must implement plain language standards
1.21 and create a new written portion of the knowledge examination to ensure the written
1.22 examination is a fair assessment of the state's traffic and driving laws. The new written
1.23 portion of the knowledge examination, to the extent practicable, must be organized to serve

- 2.1 the reader's needs and written using clear, simplified language with the following grammatical
2.2 standards:
- 2.3 (1) "you" and other pronouns address the test-taker directly;
2.4 (2) utilize the active voice;
2.5 (3) use short, simple sentences and straightforward questions;
2.6 (4) avoid complex and compound sentence structures;
2.7 (5) utilize commonly used and familiar words;
2.8 (6) avoid turning verbs into nouns through nominalization;
2.9 (7) minimize the use of abbreviations;
2.10 (8) place words carefully to avoid large gaps between the subject, verb, and object in a
2.11 sentence;
2.12 (9) avoid confusing terms such as "either, or" and "neither, nor";
2.13 (10) utilize simple verb tenses, including the simple present verb tense where practicable,
2.14 to explain confusing or complex concepts;
2.15 (11) omit double negatives and terms like "except for," "unless," and "indicated
2.16 otherwise";
2.17 (12) avoid hidden terms and use concrete, familiar words to describe confusing or
2.18 complex concepts or items;
2.19 (13) omit excess and unnecessary words;
2.20 (14) use the word "must" to express requirements;
2.21 (15) put exceptions at the end of a question;
2.22 (16) place modifying terms in correct locations; and
2.23 (17) any other recommended strategies and techniques designed to offer clear
2.24 communication to test-takers.
- 2.25 (c) Any revisions or additions to the subjects tested on a knowledge examination must
2.26 be written utilizing the plain language standards specified in paragraph (b). Revisions made
2.27 to the written examination must assess whether the applicant understands the traffic laws
2.28 of Minnesota and test knowledge of the requirements specified in subdivision 1, paragraph
2.29 (a), clause (3).

3.1 (d) The committee must convene its first meeting by August 1, 2024. Before publication
3.2 of the new written examination under plain language requirements, the committee must
3.3 meet at least four times before January 1, 2025. The commissioner of public safety may
3.4 enter into an agreement with a third party to propose, draft, and revise the written examination
3.5 under the requirements of this subdivision.

3.6 (e) The commissioner may adopt plain language standards into other Division of Driver
3.7 and Vehicle Services materials, including the driver's manual under section 171.0705.

3.8 **Sec. 2. REPORT; PLAIN LANGUAGE IMPLEMENTATION.**

3.9 By February 1, 2026, the commissioner must submit a report to the chairs and ranking
3.10 minority members of the legislative committees having jurisdiction over transportation
3.11 finance and policy. The report must detail the implementation of plain language standards
3.12 for the written portion of the driver's knowledge examination required under Minnesota
3.13 Statutes, section 171.13, subdivision 10, and include:

3.14 (1) a comprehensive analysis on the new written portion of the driver's knowledge
3.15 examination compared to its offerings in languages other than English;

3.16 (2) a report on the committee's consideration, adoption, and implementation of plain
3.17 language standards;

3.18 (3) whether the Division of Driver and Vehicle Services anticipates hiring and staffing
3.19 issues related to the implementation of plain language standards for future written
3.20 examinations;

3.21 (4) total expenditures on implementation of plain language standards;

3.22 (5) any recommended additions or modifications to the plain language standards to
3.23 improve reader comprehension; and

3.24 (6) feedback from driver's education programs, employees who administer written
3.25 examinations, the public, and English as a second language professionals.

3.26 **Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION.**

3.27 (a) \$212,000 in fiscal year 2025 is appropriated from the driver and vehicle services
3.28 operating account in the special revenue fund to the commissioner of public safety for costs
3.29 related to: (1) rewriting the written portion of the driver's knowledge examination with the
3.30 plain language standards required under Minnesota Statutes, section 171.13, subdivision

4.1 10; and (2) the report under section 2. This is a onetime appropriation and is available until
4.2 June 30, 2026.

4.3 (b) The commissioner of public safety may use the funds appropriated under this section
4.4 to enter into an agreement with a third party to participate in revisions to meet the plain
4.5 language requirements under Minnesota Statutes, section 171.13, subdivision 10, and to
4.6 provide plain language analysis of materials provided and offered to the public as part of a
4.7 driver's license application and driver education, including the driver's manual.