

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 21, 2013

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

## ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 840

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Ammiano**

February 21, 2013

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An act to amend Section ~~12804.9~~ 12800 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 840, as amended, Ammiano. Vehicles: driver's licenses: ~~driver's test; bicycles; application requirements.~~

*Existing law requires every application for an original or a renewal of a driver's license to contain specified information, including, but not limited to, a brief description of the applicant for the purpose of identification and a legible print of the thumb or finger of the applicant.*

*This bill would additionally require that every application for an original or a renewal of a driver's license also contain a statement requiring the applicant to acknowledge that he or she knows of the dangers of distracted driving.*

*Under existing law, an applicant for a driver's license is required to submit to an examination appropriate to the type of motor vehicle or combination of vehicles the applicant desires to drive. The examination includes, among other things, a test of the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the law governing the operation of vehicles upon the highways, and the applicant's ability to read and understand simple English used in highway traffic and directional signs.*

*This bill would require the examination to also include a test of the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the provisions of the*

~~California Driver Handbook relating to bicycling, including, but not limited to, bicycle markings, bicycle lanes, and bicycles in travel lanes.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1     *SECTION 1. Section 12800 of the Vehicle Code is amended to*  
2     *read:*  
3     12800. Every application for an original or a renewal of a  
4     driver's license shall contain all of the ~~following information:~~  
5     *following:*  
6     (a) The applicant's true full name, age, sex, mailing address,  
7     residence address, and social security account number.  
8     (b) A brief description of the applicant for the purpose of  
9     identification.  
10    (c) A legible print of the thumb or finger of the applicant.  
11    (d) The type of motor vehicle or combination of vehicles the  
12    applicant desires to operate.  
13    (e) Whether the applicant has ever previously been licensed as  
14    a driver and, if so, when and in what state or country and whether  
15    or not the license has been suspended or revoked and, if so, the  
16    date of and reason for the suspension or revocation.  
17    (f) Whether the applicant has ever previously been refused a  
18    driver's license in this state and, if so, the date of and the reason  
19    for the refusal.  
20    (g) Whether the applicant, within the last three years, has  
21    experienced, on one or more occasions, either a lapse of  
22    consciousness or an episode of marked confusion caused by a  
23    condition that may bring about recurrent lapses, or whether the  
24    applicant has a disease, disorder, or disability that affects his or  
25    her ability to exercise reasonable and ordinary control in operating  
26    a motor vehicle upon a highway.  
27    (h) Whether the applicant understands traffic signs and signals.  
28    (i) Whether the applicant has ever previously been issued an  
29    identification card by the department.  
30    (j) *A statement requiring the applicant to acknowledge that he*  
31    *or she knows of the dangers of distracted driving.*  
32    (j)

1 (k) Any other information that is necessary to enable the  
2 department to determine whether the applicant is entitled to a  
3 license under this code.

4 SECTION 1. Section 12804.9 of the Vehicle Code is amended  
5 to read:

6 12804.9. (a) (1) The examination shall include all of the  
7 following:

8 (A) A test of the applicant's knowledge and understanding of  
9 the provisions of this code governing the operation of vehicles  
10 upon the highways.

11 (B) A test of the applicant's ability to read and understand  
12 simple English used in highway traffic and directional signs.

13 (C) A test of the applicant's understanding of traffic signs and  
14 signals, including the bikeway signs, markers, and traffic control  
15 devices established by the Department of Transportation.

16 (D) A test of the applicant's knowledge and understanding of  
17 the provisions of the California Driver Handbook relating to  
18 bicycling, including, but not limited to, bicycle markings, bicycle  
19 lanes, and bicycles in travel lanes.

20 (E) An actual demonstration of the applicant's ability to exercise  
21 ordinary and reasonable control in operating a motor vehicle by  
22 driving it under the supervision of an examining officer. The  
23 applicant shall submit to an examination appropriate to the type  
24 of motor vehicle or combination of vehicles he or she desires a  
25 license to drive, except that the department may waive the driving  
26 test part of the examination for any applicant who submits a license  
27 issued by another state, territory, or possession of the United States;  
28 the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico if  
29 the department verifies through any acknowledged national driver  
30 record data source that there are no stops, holds, or other  
31 impediments to its issuance. The examining officer may request  
32 to see evidence of financial responsibility for the vehicle prior to  
33 supervising the demonstration of the applicant's ability to operate  
34 the vehicle. The examining officer may refuse to examine an  
35 applicant who is unable to provide proof of financial responsibility  
36 for the vehicle, unless proof of financial responsibility is not  
37 required by this code.

38 (F) A test of the hearing and eyesight of the applicant, and of  
39 other matters that may be necessary to determine the applicant's  
40 mental and physical fitness to operate a motor vehicle upon the

1 highways, and whether any grounds exist for refusal of a license  
2 under this code.

3 ~~(2) (A) Before a class A or class B driver's license, or class C~~  
4 ~~driver's license with a commercial endorsement, may be issued~~  
5 ~~or renewed, the applicant shall have in his or her driver record a~~  
6 ~~valid report of a medical examination of the applicant given not~~  
7 ~~more than two years prior to the date of the application by a health~~  
8 ~~care professional. As used in this paragraph, "health care~~  
9 ~~professional" means a person who is licensed, certified, or~~  
10 ~~registered in accordance with applicable state laws and regulations~~  
11 ~~to practice medicine and perform physical examinations in the~~  
12 ~~United States. Health care professionals are doctors of medicine,~~  
13 ~~doctors of osteopathy, physician assistants, and registered advanced~~  
14 ~~practice nurses, or doctors of chiropractic who are clinically~~  
15 ~~competent to perform the medical examination presently required~~  
16 ~~of motor carrier drivers by the United States Department of~~  
17 ~~Transportation. The report shall be on a form approved by the~~  
18 ~~department. In establishing the requirements, consideration may~~  
19 ~~be given to the standards presently required of motor carrier drivers~~  
20 ~~by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.~~

21 ~~(B) The department may accept a federal waiver of one or more~~  
22 ~~physical qualification standards if the waiver is accompanied by~~  
23 ~~a report of a nonqualifying medical examination for a class A or~~  
24 ~~class B driver's license, or class C driver's license with a~~  
25 ~~commercial endorsement, pursuant to Section 391.41(a)(3)(ii) of~~  
26 ~~Subpart E of Part 391 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal~~  
27 ~~Regulations.~~

28 ~~(3) A physical defect of the applicant that, in the opinion of the~~  
29 ~~department, is compensated for to ensure safe driving ability, shall~~  
30 ~~not prevent the issuance of a license to the applicant.~~

31 ~~(b) In accordance with the following classifications, an applicant~~  
32 ~~for a driver's license shall be required to submit to an examination~~  
33 ~~appropriate to the type of motor vehicle or combination of vehicles~~  
34 ~~the applicant desires a license to drive:~~

35 ~~(1) Class A includes the following:~~

36 ~~(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (H) of paragraph (3),~~  
37 ~~a combination of vehicles, if a vehicle being towed has a gross~~  
38 ~~vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds.~~

39 ~~(B) A vehicle towing more than one vehicle.~~

40 ~~(C) A trailer bus.~~

~~(D) The operation of all vehicles under class B and class C.~~

~~(2) Class B includes the following:~~

~~(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (H) of paragraph (3), a single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds.~~

~~(B) A single vehicle with three or more axles, except any three-axle vehicle weighing less than 6,000 pounds.~~

~~(C) A bus except a trailer bus.~~

~~(D) A farm labor vehicle.~~

~~(E) A single vehicle with three or more axles or a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds towing another vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less.~~

~~(F) A house car over 40 feet in length, excluding safety devices and safety bumpers.~~

~~(G) The operation of all vehicles covered under class C.~~

~~(3) Class C includes the following:~~

~~(A) A two-axle vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,000 pounds or less, including when the vehicle is towing a trailer or semitrailer with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less.~~

~~(B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), a two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen when towing a trailer coach not exceeding 9,000 pounds gross.~~

~~(C) A house car of 40 feet in length or less.~~

~~(D) A three-axle vehicle weighing 6,000 pounds gross or less.~~

~~(E) A house car of 40 feet in length or less or a vehicle towing another vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less, including when a tow dolly is used. A person driving a vehicle may not tow another vehicle in violation of Section 21715.~~

~~(F) (i) A two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen when towing either a trailer coach or a fifth-wheel travel trailer not exceeding 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating, when the towing of the trailer is not for compensation.~~

~~(ii) A two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen when towing a fifth-wheel travel trailer exceeding 10,000 pounds, but not exceeding 15,000 pounds, gross vehicle weight rating, when the towing of the trailer is not for compensation, and if the person has passed a specialized written examination provided by the department relating to the knowledge of this code and other~~

1 safety aspects governing the towing of recreational vehicles upon  
2 the highway.

3 The authority to operate combinations of vehicles under this  
4 subparagraph may be granted by endorsement on a class C license  
5 upon completion of that written examination.

6 (G) A vehicle or combination of vehicles with a gross  
7 combination weight rating or a gross vehicle weight rating, as  
8 those terms are defined in subdivisions (j) and (k), respectively,  
9 of Section 15210, of 26,000 pounds or less, if all of the following  
10 conditions are met:

11 (i) Is operated by a farmer, an employee of a farmer, or an  
12 instructor credentialed in agriculture as part of an instructional  
13 program in agriculture at the high school, community college, or  
14 university level.

15 (ii) Is used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations.

16 (iii) Is not used in the capacity of a for-hire carrier or for  
17 compensation.

18 (H) Firefighting equipment, provided that the equipment is  
19 operated by a person who holds a firefighter endorsement pursuant  
20 to Section 12804.11.

21 (I) A motorized scooter.

22 (J) Class C does not include a two-wheel motorcycle or a  
23 two-wheel motor-driven cycle.

24 (4) Class M1. A two-wheel motorcycle or a motor-driven cycle.  
25 Authority to operate a vehicle included in a class M1 license may  
26 be granted by endorsement on a class A, B, or C license upon  
27 completion of an appropriate examination.

28 (5) (A) Class M2 includes the following:

29 (i) A motorized bicycle or moped, or a bicycle with an attached  
30 motor, except a motorized bicycle described in subdivision (b) of  
31 Section 406.

32 (ii) A motorized scooter.

33 (B) Authority to operate vehicles included in class M2 may be  
34 granted by endorsement on a class A, B, or C license upon  
35 completion of an appropriate examination, except that no  
36 endorsement is required for a motorized scooter. Persons holding  
37 a class M1 license or endorsement may operate vehicles included  
38 in class M2 without further examination.

39 (c) A driver's license or driver certificate is not valid for  
40 operating a commercial motor vehicle, as defined in subdivision

1 ~~(b) of Section 15210, any other motor vehicle defined in paragraph~~  
2 ~~(1) or (2) of subdivision (b), or any other vehicle requiring a driver~~  
3 ~~to hold any driver certificate or any driver's license endorsement~~  
4 ~~under Section 15275, unless a medical certificate approved by the~~  
5 ~~department that has been issued within two years of the date of~~  
6 ~~the operation of that vehicle and a copy of the medical examination~~  
7 ~~report from which the certificate was issued is on file with the~~  
8 ~~department. Otherwise, the license is valid only for operating class~~  
9 ~~C vehicles that are not commercial vehicles, as defined in~~  
10 ~~subdivision (b) of Section 15210, and for operating class M1 or~~  
11 ~~M2 vehicles, if so endorsed, that are not commercial vehicles, as~~  
12 ~~defined in subdivision (b) of Section 15210.~~

13 ~~(d) A license or driver certificate issued prior to the enactment~~  
14 ~~of Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 15200) is valid to operate~~  
15 ~~the class or type of vehicles specified under the law in existence~~  
16 ~~prior to that enactment until the license or certificate expires or is~~  
17 ~~otherwise suspended, revoked, or canceled. Upon application for~~  
18 ~~renewal or replacement of a driver's license, endorsement, or~~  
19 ~~certificate required to operate a commercial motor vehicle, a valid~~  
20 ~~medical certificate on a form approved by the department shall be~~  
21 ~~submitted to the department.~~

22 ~~(e) The department may accept a certificate of driving skill that~~  
23 ~~is issued by an employer, authorized by the department to issue a~~  
24 ~~certificate under Section 15250, of the applicant, in lieu of a driving~~  
25 ~~test, on class A or B applications, if the applicant has first qualified~~  
26 ~~for a class C license and has met the other examination~~  
27 ~~requirements for the license for which he or she is applying. The~~  
28 ~~certificate may be submitted as evidence of the applicant's skill~~  
29 ~~in the operation of the types of equipment covered by the license~~  
30 ~~for which he or she is applying.~~

31 ~~(f) The department may accept a certificate of competence in~~  
32 ~~lieu of a driving test on class M1 or M2 applications, when the~~  
33 ~~certificate is issued by a law enforcement agency for its officers~~  
34 ~~who operate class M1 or M2 vehicles in their duties, if the applicant~~  
35 ~~has met the other examination requirements for the license for~~  
36 ~~which he or she is applying.~~

37 ~~(g) The department may accept a certificate of satisfactory~~  
38 ~~completion of a novice motoreylist training program approved~~  
39 ~~by the commissioner pursuant to Section 2932 in lieu of a driving~~  
40 ~~test on class M1 or M2 applications, if the applicant has met the~~

1 other examination requirements for the license for which he or she  
2 is applying. The department shall review and approve the written  
3 and driving test used by a program to determine whether the  
4 program may issue a certificate of completion.

5 (h) Notwithstanding subdivision (b), a person holding a valid  
6 California driver's license of any class may operate a short-term  
7 rental motorized bicycle without taking any special examination  
8 for the operation of a motorized bicycle, and without having a  
9 class M2 endorsement on that license. As used in this subdivision,  
10 "short-term" means 48 hours or less.

11 (i) A person under the age of 21 years shall not be issued a class  
12 M1 or M2 license or endorsement unless he or she provides  
13 evidence satisfactory to the department of completion of a  
14 motorcycle safety training program that is operated pursuant to  
15 Article 2 (commencing with Section 2930) of Chapter 5 of Division  
16 2.

17 (j) A driver of a vanpool vehicle may operate with a class C  
18 license but shall possess evidence of a medical examination  
19 required for a class B license when operating vanpool vehicles. In  
20 order to be eligible to drive the vanpool vehicle, the driver shall  
21 keep in the vanpool vehicle a statement, signed under penalty of  
22 perjury, that he or she has not been convicted of reckless driving,  
23 drunk driving, or a hit-and-run offense in the last five years.