

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1964

C 183 L 96

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Simplifying accident report record-keeping.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives K. Schmidt, R. Fisher, Robertson, Cairnes, Ogden, Hankins, Elliot, Johnson, Chandler, Scott, Tokuda, Quall, Backlund, Chopp, Horn, Koster, McMahan, Mitchell, Skinner, Benton, D. Schmidt and Stevens).

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

Background: A person who is involved in a motor vehicle accident resulting in death or injury to another, or resulting in damage to property in excess of \$500, is required to file an accident report within 24 hours of the accident. The accident report is sent to the chief of police of the city or town in which the accident occurred, or to the county sheriff or Washington State Patrol (WSP) if the accident occurred outside the city or town. The police chief or sheriff is required to send the original report to the WSP and a copy to the Department of Licensing (DOL).

The Information Technology in Transportation Committee, composed of the chief information officers and a key business executive from the WSP, DOL, and Department of Transportation, meet quarterly to address areas of mutual concern. One of the goals of this committee has been to identify duplicate systems and processes within the transportation agencies. The committee has determined that simplifying traffic accident reporting would streamline business, improve the accuracy of the data, and improve the time frame in which the information is available. This project will reduce the time it takes to access accident information from seven months to seven days.

The new system will cost \$750,000 to develop and implement, with the costs being shared equally by all three agencies. The project development will occur during Fiscal Year (FY) 96 and be available for implementation on July 1, 1996. In FY 97, nine full-time equivalents (FTEs) will be eliminated from the WSP and five FTEs from the DOL.

Upon payment of \$4.50, a driving record abstract covering the last three years may be obtained from the DOL.

Currently, drivers' abstracts may be furnished only to the following individuals or entities: (1) the individual named in the abstract; (2) an employer; (3) insurance carriers that cover the employer or a prospective employer; (4) insurance carriers that cover the named individual; (5) insurance carriers to which the named individual has applied; (6) alcohol/drug assessment or treatment agencies approved by the Department of Social and Health Services to which the named individual has applied or been assigned for evaluation or treatment; or (7) city or county prosecuting attorneys.

Current law does allow agents, acting on behalf of insurance carriers, to obtain drivers' abstracts. However, agents acting on behalf of employers or prospective employers, such as employment screening agencies, are not permitted to obtain drivers' abstracts.

Summary: The statutory requirement that a copy of the accident report that is sent to the Washington State Patrol be sent to the Department of Licensing is deleted. Agents acting on behalf of employers or prospective employers may procure certified abstracts of driving records from the DOL. Release of a certified abstract of the driving record of an employee or prospective employee requires a statement signed by (1) the employee or prospective employee that authorizes the release of the record; and (2) the employer attesting that the information is necessary to determine whether the licensee should be employed to operate a commercial vehicle or school bus. If the employer or prospective employer authorizes an agent to obtain this information on his or her behalf, the authorization must be noted in the statement.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	91	1	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House	95	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 1, 1996