

CHAPTER 381

An Act to amend and reenact § 46.2-325 of the Code of Virginia, relating to behind-the-wheel and knowledge examinations for persons less than 19 years of age.

[H 1287]

Approved March 11, 2016

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 46.2-325 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 46.2-325. Examination of applicants; waiver of Department's examination under certain circumstances; behind-the-wheel and knowledge examinations.

A. The Department shall examine every applicant for a driver's license before issuing any license to determine (i) his physical and mental qualifications and his ability to drive a motor vehicle without jeopardizing the safety of persons or property and (ii) if any facts exist which would bar the issuance of a license under §§ 46.2-311 through 46.2-316, 46.2-334, or 46.2-335. The examination, however, shall not include investigation of any facts other than those directly pertaining to the ability of the applicant to drive a motor vehicle with safety, or other than those facts declared to be prerequisite to the issuance of a license under this chapter. No applicant otherwise competent shall be required to demonstrate ability to park any motor vehicle except in an adequate parking space between horizontal markers, and not between flags or sticks simulating parked vehicles. Except as provided for in § 46.2-337, applicants for licensure to drive motor vehicles of the classifications referred to in § 46.2-328 shall submit to examinations which relate to the operation of those vehicles. The motor vehicle to be used by the applicant for the behind-the-wheel examination shall meet the safety and equipment requirements specified in Chapter 10 (§ 46.2-1000 et seq.) and possess a valid inspection sticker as required pursuant to § 46.2-1157. An autocycle shall not be used by the applicant for a behind-the-wheel examination.

Prior to taking the examination, the applicant shall either (a) present evidence that the applicant has completed a state-approved driver education class pursuant to the provisions of § 46.2-324.1 or 46.2-334 or (b) submit to the examiner a behind-the-wheel maneuvers checklist, on a form provided by the Department, that describes the vehicle maneuvers the applicant may be expected to perform while taking the behind-the-wheel examination, that has been signed by a licensed driver, certifying that the applicant has practiced the driving maneuvers contained and described therein, and that has been signed by the applicant certifying that, at all times while holding a learner's permit, the applicant has complied with the provisions of § 46.2-335 while operating a motor vehicle.

Except for applicants subject to § 46.2-312, if the Commissioner is satisfied that an applicant has demonstrated the same proficiency as required by the Department's examination through successful completion of either (1) the driver education course approved by the Department of Education or (2) a driver training course offered by a driver training school licensed under Chapter 17 (§ 46.2-1700 et seq.), he may waive those parts of the Department's examination provided for in this section that require the applicant to drive and park a motor vehicle.

B. Any person who fails the behind-the-wheel examination for a driver's license administered by the Department shall wait two days before being permitted to take another such examination. No person who fails the behind-the-wheel examination for a driver's license administered by the Department three times shall be permitted to take such examination a fourth time until he successfully completes, subsequent to the third examination failure, the in-vehicle component of driver instruction at a driver training school licensed under Chapter 17 (§ 46.2-1700 et seq.) or a comparable course approved by the Department or the Department of Education. In addition, no person who fails the driver knowledge examination for a driver's license administered by the Department three times shall be permitted to take such examination a fourth time until he successfully completes, subsequent to the third examination failure, the classroom component of driver instruction at a driver training school licensed under Chapter 17 (§ 46.2-1700 et seq.) or, for (i) persons at least 19 years old or (ii) *persons less than 19 years old who have previously completed the classroom component of driver instruction at a driver training school licensed under Chapter 17 (§ 46.2-1700 et seq.)*, a course of instruction based on the Virginia Driver's Manual offered by a driver training school licensed under Chapter 17 (§ 46.2-1700 et seq.) and approved by the Department or the Department of Education. All persons required to attend a driver training school pursuant to this section shall be required after successful completion of the necessary courses to have the applicable examination administered by the Department.

The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to persons placed under medical control by the Department pursuant to § 46.2-322.