

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R11277 JRR-D

S.B. 1918
By: Watson
Transportation
4/14/2015
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Each year, hundreds of motorcyclists are killed on Texas roadways. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, about one-quarter of the motorcycle fatalities that occurred across the United States in 2013 occurred between the hours of 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., when it is dark and motorists must rely on vehicular lighting to see other vehicles. Furthermore, a study conducted by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute found that, in crashes involving a motorcycle and another vehicle, the other driver reported never seeing the motorcycle about one-half of the time.

To combat this safety issue, some motorcyclists currently attach light emitting diodes (LEDs) on the underbody of their motorcycle. These LEDs provide another opportunity for motorists to spot a motorcycle at night. However, current law restricts the lighting that may be emitted from a vehicle, and thus it is unclear if these LEDs are permissible.

S.B. 1918 seeks to clarify this ambiguity by adding a new section to the Transportation Code to define "LED ground effect lighting equipment" and provide for its legal use in Texas. In accordance with this provision, such lighting is only permissible if it illuminates the body or ground below a motorcycle, and if it emits a non-flashing amber or white light. These limitations are designed to ensure the LED lights are not mistaken as the flashing lights of an emergency vehicle.

As proposed, S.B. 1918 amends current law relating to the use of certain lighting equipment on motorcycles.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 547, Transportation Code, by adding Section 547.306, as follows:

Sec. 547.306. LED GROUND EFFECT LIGHTING EQUIPMENT ON MOTORCYCLE. (a) Defines "LED ground effect lighting equipment" in this section to mean light emitting diode (LED) technology that is attached to the underbody of a motorcycle for the purpose of illuminating:

- (1) the body of the motorcycle; or
- (2) the ground below the motorcycle.

(b) Authorizes a person to operate a motorcycle equipped with LED ground effect lighting that emits a non-flashing amber or white light.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2015.