

Department of Finance and Administration

Legislative Impact Statement

Bill: HB1476

Bill Subtitle: TO AMEND THE VISUAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ARKANSAS DRIVER'S LICENSE.

Basic Change : Sponsor: Rep. Magie

Current law requires every applicant to pass a vision test upon issuance or renewal of their driver's license. A minimum uncorrected visual acuity of 20/40 is required for an unrestricted license, or a minimum corrected visual acuity of 20/50 is required for a restricted license. A restricted license requires the applicant to wear eye glasses when driving. Also, an applicant's field of vision must be 140 degrees if they have two functional eyes or 105 degrees if they have one functional eye. If an applicant cannot meet the 20/40 uncorrected visual acuity standard or the field of vision standard when they are tested in the Revenue Office, then they are given a Vision Referral Form to take to their eye doctor to have completed. Those forms are then required by the Revenue Office before the license may be issued. This bill will change the visual acuity required to be verified by the eye doctor from the 20/50 correctable vision requiring the restricted license to a less stringent standard of 20/70 correctable vision. There is no change in the field of vision standard if this bill is passed.

Federal Commercial Driver License rules have a distant visual acuity requirement of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in each eye without corrective lenses or visual acuity separately corrected to 20/40 (Snellen) or better with corrective lenses, distant binocular acuity of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in both eyes with or without corrective lenses, field of vision of at least 70° in the horizontal Meridian in each eye, and the ability to recognize the colors of traffic signals and devices showing standard red, green, and amber; Therefore, an amendment is needed to state the above as the requirement for a commercial driver. There are no federal rules for non-commercial drivers; therefore the 20/70 standard for non-commercial drivers with a restricted license would be allowable under federal rules.

Revenue Impact :

Because the visual acuity standard of 20/40 for unrestricted license is not changed by this bill, then there are no changes required for the eye testing machines in the Revenue Offices and no revenue impact if this bill is passed.

Taxpayer Impact :

Taxpayers with visual acuity of 20/50 and 20/70 will now be able to receive a restricted license.

Resources Required :

DFA will be required to change the Vision Referral Forms if this bill is passed. New forms will need to be printed and distributed to the Revenue Offices.

Time Required :

There is no additional time required if this bill is passed.

Procedural Changes :

There are no procedural changes required if this bill is passed.

Legal Analysis :

HB1476 amends the vision requirements for an Arkansas Driver's License. The vision requirement for an unrestricted driver's license remains 20/40. However, drivers currently with corrected vision of 20/50 or better may receive a restricted driver's license. This requirement for a restricted license, as proposed by HB1476, is lowered to 20/70. HB1476 also amends the restriction that prohibits issuing a driver's license to those receiving state benefits as a blind or nearly blind person from 20/50 to 20/70.

Currently, vision testing machines used by the Office of Driver Services only measure the 20/40 vision requirement. Any vision testing for lower visual acuity is done by eye care professionals who complete DFA forms noting the results. These forms would need to be updated by the DFA. Otherwise, there will be no change to DFA operations. HB1476 lists no effective date or emergency clause.