

STATE OF NEW YORK

3327

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 24, 2025

Introduced by Sen. SKOUFIS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Transportation

AN ACT to amend the vehicle and traffic law, in relation to required protective headgear for operators of bicycles, skateboards, in-line skates and scooters under eighteen years of age

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The section heading, subdivision 4, paragraphs (a) and (b)
2 of subdivision 5, and subdivisions 5-a, 5-b, 6, paragraph (a) of subdivi-
3 sion 8 and subdivision 9 of section 1238 of the vehicle and traffic
4 law, the section heading, subdivision 6 and paragraph (a) of subdivision
5 8 as amended by sections 4, 6, and 7 of part XX of chapter 58 of the
6 laws of 2020, respectively, subdivision 4 as amended by chapter 267 of
7 the laws of 1993, paragraphs (a) and (b) of subdivision 5 as amended by
8 chapter 457 of the laws of 1999, subdivision 5-a and subdivision 9 as
9 amended by chapter 703 of the laws of 2004, subdivision 5-b as added by
10 chapter 402 of the laws of 2001, are amended to read as follows:

11 Passengers on bicycles under one year of age prohibited; passengers
12 and operators under [~~fourteen~~ **eighteen**] years of age to wear protective
13 headgear; operators of class three bicycles with electric assist to wear
14 protective headgear.

15 4. The court shall waive any fine for which a person who violates the
16 provisions of paragraph (a) of subdivision two of this section would be
17 liable if such person supplies the court with proof that between the
18 date of violation and the appearance date for such violation such person
19 purchased or rented a helmet, which meets the requirements of paragraph
20 (a) of subdivision two of this section. Further, the court shall waive
21 any fine for which a person who violates the provisions of paragraph (b)
22 of subdivision two of this section would be liable if such person
23 supplies the court with proof that between the date of violation and the
24 appearance date for such violation such person purchased or rented a

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[~~-~~] is old law to be omitted.

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1 seat which meets the requirements of paragraph (b) of subdivision two of
2 this section. The court [~~may~~] shall waive any fine for which a person
3 who violates the provisions of subdivision two of this section would be
4 liable if the court finds that due to reasons of economic hardship such
5 person was unable to purchase a helmet or seat. Such waiver of fine
6 shall not apply to a second or subsequent conviction under paragraph (a)
7 or (b) of subdivision two of this section.

8 (a) No person operating a bicycle shall allow a person five or more
9 years of age and less than [~~fourteen~~] eighteen years of age to ride as a
10 passenger on a bicycle unless such passenger is wearing a helmet meeting
11 standards established by the commissioner.

12 (b) No person, one or more years of age and less than [~~fourteen~~] eigh-
13 teen years of age, shall operate a bicycle unless such person is wearing
14 a helmet meeting standards established by the commissioner.

15 5-a. No person, one or more years of age and less than [~~fourteen~~]
16 eighteen years of age, shall skate or glide on in-line skates or a skate
17 board unless such person is wearing a helmet meeting standards estab-
18 lished by the commissioner. For the purposes of this subdivision, wear-
19 ing a helmet means having a helmet of good fit fastened securely on the
20 head of such wearer with the helmet straps securely fastened.

21 5-b. No person less than [~~fourteen~~] eighteen years of age shall ride
22 upon, propel or otherwise operate a two-wheeled vehicle commonly called
23 a scooter unless such person is wearing a helmet meeting standards
24 established by the commissioner. As used in this subdivision, wearing a
25 helmet means having a properly fitting helmet fixed securely on the head
26 of such wearer with the helmet straps securely fastened.

27 6. (a) Any person who violates the provisions of subdivision five,
28 five-a, five-b or five-c of this section shall pay a civil fine not to
29 exceed fifty dollars.

30 (b) The court shall waive any fine for which a person who violates the
31 provisions of subdivision five, five-a, five-b or subdivision five-c of
32 this section would be liable if such person supplies the court with
33 proof that between the date of violation and the appearance date for
34 such violation such person purchased or rented a helmet.

35 (c) The court [~~may~~] shall waive any fine for which a person who
36 violates the provisions of subdivision five, five-a, five-b, or five-c
37 of this section would be liable if the court finds that due to reasons
38 of economic hardship such person was unable to purchase a helmet or due
39 to such economic hardship such person was unable to obtain a helmet from
40 the statewide in-line skate and bicycle helmet distribution program, as
41 established in section two hundred six of the public health law, or a
42 local distribution program. Such waiver of a fine shall not apply to a
43 second or subsequent violation of subdivision five-c of this section.

44 (a) A police officer shall only issue a summons for a violation of
45 subdivision two, five, or five-a of this section by a person less than
46 [~~fourteen~~] eighteen years of age to the parent or guardian of such
47 person if the violation by such person occurs in the presence of such
48 person's parent or guardian and where such parent or guardian is eigh-
49 teen years of age or more. Such summons shall only be issued to such
50 parent or guardian, and shall not be issued to the person less than
51 [~~fourteen~~] eighteen years of age.

52 9. Subdivisions five, five-a, five-b, and six of this section shall
53 not be applicable to any county, city, town or village that has enacted
54 a local law or ordinance prior to the effective date of this subdivision
55 that prohibits a person who is one or more years of age and less than
56 [~~fourteen~~] eighteen years of age from operating a bicycle or skating or

1 gliding on in-line skates or a skate board without wearing a bicycle
2 helmet meeting the standards of the American National Standards Insti-
3 tute (Ansi Z 90.4 bicycle helmet standards), the Snell Memorial Founda-
4 tion's Standards for Protective Headgear for use in Bicycling, or the
5 American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) bike helmet standards,
6 or that prohibits a person operating a bicycle from allowing a person
7 five or more years of age and less than [~~fourteen~~ eighteen] years of age
8 to ride as a passenger on a bicycle unless such passenger is wearing a
9 bicycle helmet that meets such standards. The failure of any person to
10 comply with any such local law or ordinance shall not constitute contri-
11 butory negligence or assumption of risk, and shall not in any way bar,
12 preclude or foreclose an action for personal injury or wrongful death by
13 or on behalf of such person, nor in any way diminish or reduce the
14 damages recoverable in any such action. The legislative body of a coun-
15 ty, city, town or village may enact a local law or ordinance that
16 prohibits a person who is [~~fourteen~~ eighteen] or more years of age from
17 skating or gliding on in-line skates, operating a skate board, or oper-
18 ating or riding as a passenger on a bicycle without wearing a bicycle
19 helmet.

20 § 2. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after
21 it shall have become a law.