

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill modifies provisions governing work zones to: prohibit cell phone use in work zones when workers are present, set a \$300 fine amount for some traffic violations in work zones, allocate fine revenue to a new work zone safety account, appropriate account funds for work zone safety activities, permit stopping and citing drivers or owners of vehicles used in violation of traffic flagger directions, and set a default 45 m.p.h. speed limit in some highway work zones when workers are present.

Section

- 1 Work zone.** Defines “work zone” in the chapter on traffic safety, to identify construction or maintenance work by a road authority (such as MnDOT, counties, and cities) along with at least one of some other conditions, such as a temporary work zone speed limit or lane closure.
- 2 Obedience to traffic-control signal or authorized persons; presumptions.** Eliminates a provision on traffic direction from flaggers, which is moved to a separate subdivision.
- 3 Obedience to work zone flagger; violation, penalty.** Sets a statutory fine amount of \$300 (not including a \$75 court surcharge or other fees) for a motorist who violates the directives of a traffic flagger in a work zone. Allocates the funds to a new work zone safety account (being created in section 7 of the bill).

Authorizes stopping and citing the driver of a vehicle operated in violation of flagger directions for up to four hours after the time of the violation. Provides for issuing a citation to the owner or lessor of a vehicle operated in violation of flagger directions, with exceptions

Section

and limitations.

- 4** **Reduced speed limits in work zone.** Reduces the default speed limit to 45 m.p.h. in work zones when workers are present, in cases where the usual speed limit is 55 m.p.h. or higher. Provides for situations in which the limit is not adjusted down, including if positive barriers are in place or if the limit has otherwise been adjusted to below 45 m.p.h.
- 5** **Speed zoning in work zone.** Eliminates a provision that doubles the fine when a speeding violation occurs in certain work zones when workers are present, which is replaced with statutory fine amount in a separate subdivision. (Under current law, the amount of fine varies depending on the driver's speed.)
- 6** **Work zone speed limit violations.** Sets a statutory fine amount of \$300 (not including a \$75 court surcharge or other fees) for violating a speed limit and other speed related violations in a work zone. Allocates the funds to a new work zone safety account (being created in section 7 of the bill).
- 7** **[169.255] Work zone safety.**
 - Subd. 1. Work zone safety account; appropriation.** Establishes a new work zone safety account (which receives some traffic fine funds), and appropriates the funds to the Minnesota Department of Transportation for enhanced traffic enforcement in work zones on state and local roads as well as for work zone safety education efforts.
 - Subd. 2. Legislative report.** Requires an annual legislative report on uses of funds from the work zone safety account, effectiveness of efforts, and the automated speed enforcement pilot program (authorized in section 8 of the bill). It is first due October 1, 2015.
- 8** **Prohibition on use; work zones.** Prohibits using a cell phone while operating a vehicle in a work zone, both in handheld and hands free modes, when workers are present.