

# Law cracks down on newdrivers

By TOM LONERGAN

The probationary period for newly licensed drivers is tripled under a new state law that took effect today (Monday).

The law, passed this year by the Michigan Legislature and signed by Gov. William Milliken, increases the probationary time from one to three years and gives the state a freer hand in re-examining new drivers.

A new driver will only be removed from probationary status if he or she is not convicted of a moving violation or at fault in an accident for a 10 month period during the first year.

"If a person continues to pick up convictions and accidents, this (probation) could go on indefinitely," said John Tilles of the Secretary of State's Bureau of Driver Improvement.

The former law "had no provisions for a steady period of probation," Tilles added.

Drivers on probation are more susceptible to having their licenses suspended or revoked.

THE NEW LAW was drafted to put younger drivers on probation longer. "It's been estimated beginning drivers have worse driving records on the average than more experienced drivers," Tilles said.

The Secretary of State's office wanted the probation period extended to four years.

Tilles said youths 16-18 "don't do a lot of driving" because they generally use their parents' cars. The former pro-

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— John Tilles,  
Bureau of Driver Improvement

bation period wasn't covering the period younger drivers usually buy their first car and drive more, he said.

The new law allows the state to order a driver to re-take the driving test if he's been convicted of one moving violation during the first year of probation. These drivers generally don't have their licenses suspended, Tilles said. But a new driver could be suspended for failing to appear in court on a moving violation charge, he added.

After the first year of probation, the driver faces re-testing if convicted of speeding 16 miles per hour or more over a posted speed limit or accumulating three moving violations.

For drivers not on probation, the state can't order re-testing unless the person accumulates 12 moving violation points in two years, Tilles said.

Moving violation points range from two for violations like ignoring a "no left turn" sign to six for driving under the influence of liquor or drugs, reckless driving or hit-and-run. The most

severe speeding penalty is four points.

THE DRINKING and driving penalties are stiffer for a driver on probation, under the new law.

If a police officer determines that drinking was a factor in an accident, the new driver's probationary time can be extended, Tilles said. A breathalyzer test is not required, he added.

Citing statistics, Tilles said that 11 percent of state drivers under 20 "have almost 20 percent of all fatal accidents."

He said the stricter re-testing measures under the new law will allow the state to pull drivers off the road who have continual moving violations, accidents or incidents of drinking and driving.

"That's the whole point of re-examining drivers anyway," said Tilles.

## SEMTA hearing to air new zone plan

Creation of an additional fare zone will be the topic of a public hearing at noon Tuesday, Oct. 3 in the downtown Detroit office of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA).

The meeting, on the 13th floor of the First National Building at 660 Woodward, is open to all interested persons.

Planned service expansions make the establishment of this new zone necessary, SEMTA said.

Boundaries of the proposed fare zone, which is approximately three miles wide, are:

On the north, 23 Mile Road from

Lake St. Clair to an extension of the Wayne-Washtenaw County boundary.

On the West, the Wayne-Washtenaw County boundary to Newport Road (extended); and on the south, from Newport Road (extended) east to Lake Erie.

Currently the SEMTA service area is divided into seven fare zones, each approximately three miles wide. The new zone would be the eighth.

Base fare for travel through two zones is 55 cents. Each additional zone costs 15 cents, and maximum fare for travel through all eight zones will be \$1.45 for local routes or \$1.60 for Park and Ride routes.

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