



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

Senate Bill 589 (as enrolled)
Sponsor: Senator Peter MacGregor
Senate Committee: Transportation
House Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure

Date Completed: 3-16-18

RATIONALE

Under the Electric Patrol Vehicle Act, law enforcement and emergency service personnel in Michigan may operate electric patrol vehicles in municipalities and at universities that allow them. However, the definition of "electric patrol vehicle" has not been revised since the law was enacted in 1997. Evidently, many law enforcement agencies operate several types of popular patrol vehicles that do not fit the Act's definition, such as Segway products. Some believe that the Act should allow these types of vehicles and reflect modern patrol vehicle options. In addition, some believe that these vehicles should be permitted to operate on sidewalks. Therefore, it has been suggested that amendments be enacted to accommodate these ideas.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Electric Patrol Vehicle Act to allow a political subdivision to operate an electric patrol vehicle on a sidewalk within that political subdivision's boundaries; remove the requirement that such a vehicle have four wheels; and specify revised equipment requirements for a vehicle with three or fewer wheels.

The Act allows a political subdivision, by ordinance, to authorize its law enforcement, emergency service, and parking enforcement employees to operate an electric patrol vehicle on a street or highway within that political subdivision's boundaries. ("Political subdivision" means a city, village, township, county, or university.)

An electric patrol vehicle must be limited as follows:

- To a street or highway with a posted speed limit of not more than 25 miles per hour.
- To crossing a street or highway with a posted speed limit of not more than 50 miles per hour.

The bill also would allow an electric patrol vehicle to be operated on a sidewalk within that political subdivision's boundaries. "Sidewalk" would mean a paved public sidewalk intended for pedestrian use outside of and adjacent to the improved portion of a street or highway designed for vehicular travel.

Currently, "electric patrol vehicle" means an electrically powered motor vehicle designed to carry up to four people, at a speed of not more than 25 miles per hour, having not less than four wheels, and having an unloaded weight of not more than 1,300. The bill would remove the requirement for at least four wheels.

The Act requires an electric patrol vehicle to have all of the following equipment:

- Brakes adequate to control the movement of and to stop and hold the vehicle.

- At least two head lamps that enable the operator of the vehicle to see a person not less than 100 feet to the front of the vehicle.
- At least two rear lamps that comply with Section 697 of the Michigan Vehicle Code (which specifies the color, function, and visibility requirements of the lamps).
- A windshield of safety glass as defined under the Code.
- A horn as defined under the Code.
- Safety belts designed and installed with brackets and of sufficient strength to hold a passenger during a collision.
- A parking brake sufficient to hold the vehicle in a stopped position.
- Reflectors that reflect an amber or red color as required for motor vehicles under the Code.

Under the bill, an electric patrol vehicle with three wheels or less would have to have all of the following equipment:

- Brakes adequate to control the movement of and to stop and hold the vehicle.
- One or two headlamps that enabled the operator of the vehicle to see a person not less than 100 feet to the front of the vehicle.
- At least one rear lamp that complied with Section 697 of the Code.
- A horn as defined under the Code.
- A parking brake sufficient to hold the vehicle in a stopped position.
- Reflectors that reflected an amber or red color as required for motor vehicles under the Code.

A political subdivision could, by ordinance, exempt an electric patrol vehicle from the existing equipment requirements or the requirements proposed for vehicles with three or fewer wheels.

The bill would take effect 90 days after it was enacted.

MCL 257.1572 et al.

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

Electric patrol vehicles can augment an officer's ability to fulfil his or her responsibilities. However, many modern and desirable patrol vehicles, particularly the two- and three-wheeled Segway vehicles, do not fit the Electric Patrol Vehicle Act's requirements, and none can legally operate on sidewalks. The Grand Rapids Police Department has found these vehicles to be important and successful tools, and believes that the vehicles would be more effective if they could be used on sidewalks. According to an article from policeone.com, Segway units are useful in congested metropolitan areas because of their size and agility.¹ The units can move more quickly than people walk, have more mobility than a standard police cruiser to make a transition between streets and sidewalks, and allow officers to transport additional equipment without the burden of carrying it while walking. By amending the Act to allow different types of electric patrol vehicles and permit law enforcement and emergency personnel to use the vehicles on sidewalks, the bill would enhance the ability of those personnel to perform their duties and would increase the safety of individuals.

The bill also would accommodate the design of two- and three-wheeled vehicles by deleting the requirement that they have a windshield and safety belts, and reducing the number of front and rear lights required.

Legislative Analyst: Drew Krogulecki

¹ McCallion, Teresa, "2 Wheel Drive: Law enforcement applications for the Segway", policeone.com, 9-19-2005.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would potentially reduce costs for some universities and local governments by increasing options for the types of vehicles that may be operated under the Electric Vehicle Patrol Act.

Fiscal Analyst: Ryan Bergan

SAS\A1718\sb589ea

This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.