
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TRAFFIC ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that traffic accident
2 management is of utmost public importance, especially when a
3 fatality occurs. Although the evidence collected at traffic
4 accident scenes may be crucial to determining the cause of the
5 accident, these accident investigations proceed at a slower rate
6 in Hawaii than in comparable metropolitan areas in the United
7 States. The average length of time for lane closures in Hawaii
8 ranges from two to four hours for major traffic accidents to
9 over eight hours when a fatality occurs.

10 The legislature also finds that these prolonged closures of
11 traffic lanes adversely affect the public and our economy
12 because students cannot reach school and school activities or
13 return home afterwards; employees cannot reach their place of
14 work or attend meetings at remote locations; and businesses
15 cannot receive or deliver products necessary to conduct
16 business. These traffic jams also bode ill for the economy
17 because tourists cannot reach their destinations and spend money
18 and may leave Hawaii feeling that they have not been on vacation



1 at all. Moreover, these prolonged investigative delays may
2 result in secondary accidents that cause further delays.

3 The purpose of this Act is to expedite the investigation of
4 fatal traffic accidents.

5 SECTION 2. (a) The police department of each county
6 shall:

7 (1) Identify the roadways, or class of roadways, that are
8 most critical to the free movement of persons and
9 commerce; and

10 (2) Establish protocols necessary to coordinate major
11 accident investigations with law enforcement and other
12 authorities having jurisdiction over the location of a
13 major accident, including immediately notifying the
14 medical examiner in the case of fatal traffic
15 accidents so that the medical examiner or coroner can
16 conduct the appropriate accident scene investigation
17 simultaneously with the police, to the extent
18 practical.

19 (b) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to restrict the
20 police department's authority to enforce any of the powers
21 otherwise granted to it by law.



1 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2009.

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Report Title:

Highway Safety; Traffic Accident Investigation

Description:

Requires the police department of each county to identify roadways most critical to free movement and commerce and establish protocols necessary to coordinate major accident investigations, including immediately notifying the medical examiner in fatal accident cases.

