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New Driving Test Rules Lack Direction

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A man and women motor along on a Vespa scooter. **A. Makhonin**

Amendments to the law on traffic safety that could inadvertently hold back aspiring drivers from obtaining licenses came into force on Tuesday.

One of the amendments stipulates that people can no longer prepare themselves to take the driving test, which consists of both theory and practical examinations. Instead, they must undertake a state approved preparation program with a driving school that holds a certificate entitling it to instruct candidates.

However, driving schools are unable to obtain certification, because the make-up of the preparation program is still up in the air, with the Transport Ministry and the Education and Science Ministry arguing over who should develop it, Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported. Driving instructors have complained that they are not even being consulted about the program, and have raised concerns that the need for certification could lead to a large increase in training course prices.

Moped drivers may also be forced to leave their wheels in the garage for a few weeks due to the amendments. It is now necessary to obtain a category M license to drive a scooter, but driving schools are not expected to be able to offer the corresponding test until next month, Vesti.ru reported. Light motorcycle drivers can be fined 800 rubles ($25) for driving without a license.

A minimum age of 16 has also be brought in for prospective scooter drivers, Interfax reported. Other changes in the law dictate that it is now possible to prepare for and take a driving test in a car with an automatic transmission. Of course, passing a driving test in an automatic only entitles the license-holder to drive that type of car.

An amendment that prevents people from being employed in Russia as drivers without a Russian driver's license will only be upheld from May 9, 2014, onward.

The drivers' employers will be made responsible for ensuring that their staff have appropriate license. If they fail to do so, they can be fined up to 50,000 rubles ($1,500).

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