



**An Bille um Thrácht ar Bhóithre agus um Bóithre
(Díolúine do Rothair Fola) (Leasú), 2025
Road Traffic and Roads (Blood Bikes Exemption)
(Amendment) Bill 2025**

*Meabhrán Míniúcháin
Explanatory Memorandum*



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BÓITHRE (DÍOLÚINE DO ROTHAIR FOLA) (LEASÚ), 2025
ROAD TRAFFIC AND ROADS (BLOOD BIKES EXEMPTION)
(AMENDMENT) BILL 2025**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Purpose of the Bill

For years, unpaid volunteers have operated rapid response motorbike-based courier services free of charge for healthcare facilities in the form of Blood Bike groups. This work includes the transport of blood, platelets, medicinal samples, surgical instruments, human donor milk and other clinical products to hospitals, medical centres, nursing homes, general practitioners and other healthcare facilities and contexts.

The British government has recognised the role of these front-line services in law and through an exemption from road tax for their vehicles, following campaign efforts of the Nationwide Association of Blood Bikes, which includes a number of member organisations in Ireland.

Under current legislation, ambulance, fire brigade vehicles and vehicles used by An Garda Síochana and the Defence Forces are exempted from paying road tolls, and I previously introduced a Roads (Amendment) Bill in 2017 to exempt sea and river rescue teams, including the Coastguard, Civil Defence and the RNLI, from paying road tolls when participating in search and recovery missions.

The cost of travelling through road tolls places an unnecessary financial burden on volunteers who are penalised for fulfilling their potentially life-saving work. This Bill seeks to expand the exemption to cover the brave men and women who assist the State through the provision of blood bike services.

Current regulations also provide for the exemption of ambulance, fire brigade vehicles and vehicles used by An Garda Síochana and the Defence Forces from rules surrounding the general regulation and control of traffic, including the parking of vehicles, such as restrictions on the use of bus lanes under the Road Traffic (Traffic and Parking) Regulations 1997 (S.I. No. 182 of 1997).

This Bill would provide that any exemption granted to ambulances from such traffic restrictions under regulation would apply also to blood bike services.

Provisions of the Bill

Section 1 is the standard provision clarifying the Acts being amended and key definitions.

Section 2 amends section 62 of the Roads Act 1993 to exempt vehicles used by blood bike services from the payment of tolls.

Section 3 amends section 35 of the Road Traffic Act 1994 to expand the exemption for ambulances from restrictions on traffic under regulation to apply to blood bike services.

Section 4 is the standard provision dealing with the short title, collective citation, and commencement.

Aengus Ó Snodaigh, TD,
Iúil, 2025.