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AB-925 Vehicle removal: expired registration. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 925

CHAPTER 92

An act to amend Section 22651 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

[Approved by Governor July 21, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State July 21, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 925, Ta. Vehicle removal: expired registration.

Existing law prohibits a person from driving, moving, or leaving standing upon a highway, or in an offstreet public parking facility, any motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, pole or pipe dolly or logging dolly, unless it is registered and the appropriate fees have been paid, except as specified. Existing law requires current month and year tabs indicating the month and year expiration of a vehicle's registration to be attached to the rear license plate assigned to the vehicle for the last preceding registration year in which the licensed plates were issued.

Existing law requires a law enforcement officer or a person authorized to enforce parking laws and regulations to verify, using available Department of Motor Vehicles records, that no current registration exists for a vehicle before issuing a citation for a violation of the requirement to attach the appropriate tabs. Existing law prohibits the issuance of a citation against a vehicle in violation of that requirement if the vehicle has a current registration on file with the department or if a person authorized to enforce parking laws and regulations does not have immediate access to the department's records.

Existing law authorizes a peace officer or a regularly employed and salaried employee who is engaged in directing traffic or enforcing parking laws and regulations to remove a vehicle that, among other things, is parked or left standing upon a highway for 72 or more consecutive hours in violation of a local ordinance authorizing removal or is found or operated upon a highway, public land, or an offstreet parking facility with a registration expiration date in excess of six months before the date it is found or operated.

This bill would require a peace officer or a regularly employed and salaried employee who is engaged in directing traffic or enforcing parking laws and regulations to verify, using available Department of Motor Vehicles records, that no current registration exists for a vehicle before removing the vehicle. The bill would prohibit a vehicle from being removed if it has a current registration on file with the department or if the officer or employee does not have immediate access to the department's records. By requiring a higher level of service from law enforcement officers, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 22651 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

22651. A peace officer, as defined in Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 830) of Title 3 of Part 2 of the Penal Code, or a regularly employed and salaried employee who is engaged in directing traffic or enforcing parking laws and regulations of a city, county, or jurisdiction of a state agency in which a vehicle is located may remove a vehicle located within the territorial limits in which the officer or employee may act, under the following circumstances:

(a) If a vehicle is left unattended upon a bridge, viaduct, or causeway or in a tube or tunnel where the vehicle constitutes an obstruction to traffic.

(b) If a vehicle is parked or left standing upon a highway in a position so as to obstruct the normal movement of traffic or in a condition so as to create a hazard to other traffic upon the highway.

(c) If a vehicle is found upon a highway or public land and a report has previously been made that the vehicle is stolen or a complaint has been filed and a warrant thereon is issued charging that the vehicle was embezzled.

(d) If a vehicle is illegally parked so as to block the entrance to a private driveway, and it is impractical to move the vehicle from in front of the driveway to another point on the highway.

(e) If a vehicle is illegally parked so as to prevent access by firefighting equipment to a fire hydrant, and it is impracticable to move the vehicle from in front of the fire hydrant to another point on the highway.

(f) If a vehicle, except highway maintenance or construction equipment, is stopped, parked, or left standing for more than four hours upon the right-of-way of a freeway that has full control of access and no crossings at grade, and the driver, if present, cannot move the vehicle under its own power.

(g) If the person in charge of a vehicle upon a highway or public land is, by reason of physical injuries or illness, incapacitated to an extent so as to be unable to provide for its custody or removal.

(h) (1) If an officer arrests a person driving or in control of a vehicle for an alleged offense, and the officer is, by this code or other law, required or permitted to take, and does take, the person into custody.

(2) If an officer serves a notice of an order of suspension or revocation pursuant to Section 13388 or 13389.

(i) (1) If a vehicle, other than a rented vehicle, is found upon a highway or public land, or is removed pursuant to this code, and it is known that the vehicle has been issued five or more notices of parking violations to which the owner or person in control of the vehicle has not responded within 21 calendar days of notice of citation issuance or citation issuance or 14 calendar days of the mailing of a notice of delinquent parking violation to the agency responsible for processing notices of parking violations, or the registered owner of the vehicle is known to have been issued five or more notices for failure to pay or failure to appear in court for traffic violations for which a certificate has not been issued by the magistrate or clerk of the court hearing the case showing that the case has been adjudicated or concerning which the registered owner's record has not been cleared pursuant to Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 41500) of Division 17, the vehicle may be impounded until that person furnishes to the impounding law enforcement agency all of the following:

(A) Evidence of their identity.

(B) An address within this state where they can be located.

(C) Satisfactory evidence that all parking penalties due for the vehicle and all other vehicles registered to the registered owner of the impounded vehicle and all traffic violations of the registered owner have been cleared.

(2) The requirements in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (1) shall be fully enforced by the impounding law enforcement agency on and after the time that the Department of Motor Vehicles is able to provide access to the necessary records.

(3) A notice of parking violation issued for an unlawfully parked vehicle shall be accompanied by a warning that repeated violations may result in the impounding of the vehicle. In lieu of furnishing satisfactory evidence that the full amount of parking penalties or bail has been deposited, that person may demand to be taken without unnecessary delay before a magistrate, for traffic offenses, or a hearing examiner, for parking offenses, within the county where the offenses charged are alleged to have been committed and who has jurisdiction of the offenses and is nearest or most accessible with reference to the place where the vehicle is impounded. Evidence of current registration shall be produced after a vehicle has been impounded, or, at the discretion of the impounding law enforcement agency, a notice to appear for violation of subdivision (a) of Section 4000 shall be issued to that person.

(4) A vehicle shall be released to the legal owner, as defined in Section 370, if the legal owner does all of the following:

(A) Pays the cost of towing and storing the vehicle.

(B) Submits evidence of payment of fees as provided in Section 9561.

(C) Completes an affidavit in a form acceptable to the impounding law enforcement agency stating that the vehicle was not in possession of the legal owner at the time of occurrence of the offenses relating to standing or parking. A vehicle released to a legal owner under this subdivision is a repossessed vehicle for purposes of disposition or sale. The impounding agency shall have a lien on any surplus that remains upon sale of the vehicle, to which the registered owner is or may be entitled, as security for the full amount of the parking penalties for all notices of parking violations issued for the vehicle and for all local administrative charges imposed pursuant to Section 22850.5. The legal owner shall promptly remit to, and deposit with, the agency responsible for processing notices of parking violations from that surplus, on receipt of that surplus, the full amount of the parking penalties for all notices of parking violations issued for the vehicle and for all local administrative charges imposed pursuant to Section 22850.5.

(5) The impounding agency that has a lien on the surplus that remains upon the sale of a vehicle to which a registered owner is entitled pursuant to paragraph (4) has a deficiency claim against the registered owner for the full amount of the parking penalties for all notices of parking violations issued for the vehicle and for all local administrative charges imposed pursuant to Section 22850.5, less the amount received from the sale of the vehicle.

(j) If a vehicle is found illegally parked and there are no license plates or other evidence of registration displayed, the vehicle may be impounded until the owner or person in control of the vehicle furnishes the impounding law enforcement agency evidence of their identity and an address within this state where they can be located.

(k) If a vehicle is parked or left standing upon a highway for 72 or more consecutive hours in violation of a local ordinance authorizing removal.

(l) If a vehicle is illegally parked on a highway in violation of a local ordinance forbidding standing or parking and the use of a highway, or a portion thereof, is necessary for the cleaning, repair, or construction of the highway, or for the installation of underground utilities, and signs giving notice that the vehicle may be removed are erected or placed at least 24 hours prior to the removal by a local authority pursuant to the ordinance.

(m) If the use of the highway, or a portion of the highway, is authorized by a local authority for a purpose other than the normal flow of traffic or for the movement of equipment, articles, or structures of unusual size, and the parking of a vehicle would prohibit or interfere with that use or movement, and signs giving notice that the vehicle may be removed are erected or placed at least 24 hours prior to the removal by a local authority pursuant to the ordinance.

(n) Whenever a vehicle is parked or left standing where local authorities, by resolution or ordinance, have prohibited parking and have authorized the removal of vehicles. Except as provided in subdivisions (v) and (w), a vehicle shall not be removed unless signs are posted giving notice of the removal.

(o) (1) If a vehicle is found or operated upon a highway, public land, or an offstreet parking facility under any of the following circumstances:

(A) (i) With a registration expiration date in excess of six months before the date it is found or operated on the highway, public lands, or the offstreet parking facility.

(ii) Prior to removing a vehicle pursuant to this subparagraph, the officer or employee shall verify, using available Department of Motor Vehicles records, that no current registration exists for the vehicle. A vehicle shall not be removed pursuant to this subparagraph if it has a current registration on file with the Department of Motor Vehicles, regardless of whether the vehicle is in compliance with subdivision (a) of Section 5204. If the officer or employee does not have immediate access to those records, a vehicle shall not be removed pursuant to this subparagraph.

(B) Displaying in, or upon, the vehicle, a registration card, identification card, temporary receipt, license plate, special plate, registration sticker, device issued pursuant to Section 4853, or permit that was not issued for that vehicle or is not otherwise lawfully used on that vehicle under this code.

(C) Displaying in, or upon, the vehicle, an altered, forged, counterfeit, or falsified registration card, identification card, temporary receipt, license plate, special plate, registration sticker, device issued pursuant to Section 4853, or permit.

(D) (i) The vehicle is operating using autonomous technology, without the registered owner or manufacturer of the vehicle having first applied for and obtained a valid permit that is required to operate the vehicle on public roads pursuant to Section

38750, Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 227.00) of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, and Article 3.8 (commencing with Section 228.00) of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations.

(ii) The vehicle is operating using autonomous technology after the registered owner or person in control of the vehicle received notice that the vehicle's permit required for the operation of the vehicle pursuant to Section 38750, Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 227.00) of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, and Article 3.8 (commencing with Section 228.00) of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations is suspended, terminated, or revoked.

(iii) For purposes of this subdivision, the terms "autonomous technology" and "autonomous vehicle" have the same meanings as in Section 38750.

(iv) This subparagraph does not provide the authority for a peace officer to stop an autonomous vehicle solely for the purpose of determining whether the vehicle is operating using autonomous technology without a valid permit required to operate the autonomous vehicle on public roads pursuant to Section 38750, Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 227.00) of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, and Article 3.8 (commencing with Section 228.00) of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations.

(2) If a vehicle described in paragraph (1) is occupied, only a peace officer, as defined in Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 830) of Title 3 of Part 2 of the Penal Code, may remove the vehicle.

(3) For the purposes of this subdivision, the vehicle shall be released under any of the following circumstances:

(A) If the vehicle has been removed pursuant to subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of paragraph (1), to the registered owner of, or person in control of, the vehicle only after the owner or person furnishes the storing law enforcement agency with proof of current registration and a valid driver's license to operate the vehicle.

(B) If the vehicle has been removed pursuant to subparagraph (D) of paragraph (1), to the registered owner of, or person in control of, the autonomous vehicle, after the registered owner or person furnishes the storing law enforcement agency with proof of current registration and a valid driver's license, if required to operate the autonomous vehicle, and either of the following:

(i) Proof of a valid permit required to operate the autonomous vehicle using autonomous technology on public roads pursuant to Section 38750, Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 227.00) of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, and Article 3.8 (commencing with Section 228.00) of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations.

(ii) A declaration or sworn statement to the Department of Motor Vehicles that states that the autonomous vehicle will not be operated using autonomous technology upon public roads without first obtaining a valid permit to operate the vehicle pursuant to Section 38750, Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 227.00) of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, and Article 3.8 (commencing with Section 228.00) of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations.

(C) To the legal owner or the legal owner's agency, without payment of any fees, fines, or penalties for parking tickets or registration and without proof of current registration, if the vehicle will only be transported pursuant to the exemption specified in Section 4022 and if the legal owner does all of the following:

(i) Pays the cost of towing and storing the vehicle.

(ii) Completes an affidavit in a form acceptable to the impounding law enforcement agency stating that the vehicle was not in possession of the legal owner at the time of occurrence of an offense relating to standing or parking. A vehicle released to a legal owner under this subdivision is a repossessed vehicle for purposes of disposition or sale. The impounding agency has a lien on any surplus that remains upon sale of the vehicle to which the registered owner is or may be entitled, as security for the full amount of parking penalties for any notices of parking violations issued for the vehicle and for all local administrative charges imposed pursuant to Section 22850.5. Upon receipt of any surplus, the legal owner shall promptly remit to, and deposit with, the agency responsible for processing notices of parking violations from that surplus, the full amount of the parking penalties for all notices of parking violations issued for the vehicle and for all local administrative charges imposed pursuant to Section 22850.5.

(4) The impounding agency that has a lien on the surplus that remains upon the sale of a vehicle to which a registered owner is entitled has a deficiency claim against the registered owner for the full amount of parking penalties for any notices of parking violations issued for the vehicle and for all local administrative charges imposed pursuant to Section 22850.5, less the amount received from the sale of the vehicle.

(5) As used in this subdivision, "offstreet parking facility" means an offstreet facility held open for use by the public for parking vehicles and includes a publicly owned facility for offstreet parking and a privately owned facility for offstreet parking if a fee is not charged for the privilege to park and it is held open for the common public use of retail customers.

(p) If the peace officer issues the driver of a vehicle a notice to appear for a violation of Section 12500, 14601, 14601.1, 14601.2, 14601.3, 14601.4, 14601.5, or 14604, and the vehicle is not impounded pursuant to Section 22655.5. A vehicle so removed from the highway or public land, or from private property after having been on a highway or public land, shall not be released to the registered owner or their agent, except upon presentation of the registered owner's or their agent's currently valid driver's license to operate the vehicle and proof of current vehicle registration to the impounding law enforcement agency or upon order of a court.

(q) If a vehicle is parked for more than 24 hours on a portion of highway that is located within the boundaries of a common interest development, as defined in Section 4100 or 6534 of the Civil Code, and signs, as required by paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 22658 of this code, have been posted on that portion of highway providing notice to drivers that vehicles parked thereon for more than 24 hours will be removed at the owner's expense pursuant to a resolution or ordinance adopted by the local authority.

(r) If a vehicle is illegally parked and blocks the movement of a legally parked vehicle.

(s) (1) If a vehicle, except highway maintenance or construction equipment, an authorized emergency vehicle, or a vehicle that is properly permitted or otherwise authorized by the Department of Transportation, is stopped, parked, or left standing for more than eight hours within a roadside rest area or viewpoint.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), if a commercial motor vehicle, as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 15210, is stopped, parked, or left standing for more than 10 hours within a roadside rest area or viewpoint.

(3) For purposes of this subdivision, a roadside rest area or viewpoint is a publicly maintained vehicle parking area, adjacent to a highway, utilized for the convenient, safe stopping of a vehicle to enable motorists to rest or to view the scenery. If two or more roadside rest areas are located on opposite sides of the highway, or upon the center divider, within seven miles of each other, then that combination of rest areas is considered to be the same rest area.

(t) If a peace officer issues a notice to appear for a violation of Section 25279.

(u) If a peace officer issues a citation for a violation of Section 11700, and the vehicle is being offered for sale.

(v) (1) If a vehicle is a mobile billboard advertising display, as defined in Section 395.5, and is parked or left standing in violation of a local resolution or ordinance adopted pursuant to subdivision (m) of Section 21100, if the registered owner of the vehicle was previously issued a warning citation for the same offense pursuant to paragraph (2).

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (a) of Section 22507, a city or county, in lieu of posting signs noticing a local ordinance prohibiting mobile billboard advertising displays adopted pursuant to subdivision (m) of Section 21100 may provide notice by issuing a warning citation advising the registered owner of the vehicle that they may be subject to penalties upon a subsequent violation of the ordinance that may include the removal of the vehicle as provided in paragraph (1). A city or county is not required to provide further notice for a subsequent violation prior to the enforcement of penalties for a violation of the ordinance.

(w) (1) If a vehicle is parked or left standing in violation of a local ordinance or resolution adopted pursuant to subdivision (p) of Section 21100, if the registered owner of the vehicle was previously issued a warning citation for the same offense pursuant to paragraph (2).

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (a) of Section 22507, a city or county, in lieu of posting signs noticing a local ordinance regulating advertising signs adopted pursuant to subdivision (p) of Section 21100 may provide notice by issuing a warning citation advising the registered owner of the vehicle that they may be subject to penalties upon a subsequent violation of the ordinance that may include the removal of the vehicle as provided in paragraph (1). A city or county is not required to provide further notice for a subsequent violation prior to the enforcement of penalties for a violation of the ordinance.

SEC. 2. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.