



SB-76 Vehicles: registration fees and penalties. (2025-2026)

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL

NO. 76

Introduced by Senator Seyarto

January 15, 2025

An act to amend, repeal, and add Section 9562 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 76, Seyarto. Vehicles: registration fees and penalties.

Existing law imposes renewal fee penalties for late payment of vehicle registration except in limited specified cases. Existing law authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles to waive the registration penalties accrued before the purchase of a vehicle upon payment for the fees for registration due, if the transferee or purchaser was not aware that the fees were unpaid. Existing law also authorizes the department to waive the registration fees that became due before the purchase of the vehicle if the transferee or purchaser was not aware that the fees were unpaid and the license plate assigned to the vehicle displays a validating device issued by the department that contains the year number of the registration year for which the transferee or purchaser is requesting a waiver of fees. Existing law further provides that these unpaid fees and penalties are the personal debt of the transferor of the vehicle and may be collected by the department in an appropriate civil action if the department has waived the fees and penalties.

This bill would instead require the department to waive delinquent registration fees and penalties when a transferee or purchaser of a vehicle applies for a transfer of registration if the department determines that the fees became due or the penalties accrued before the purchase of the vehicle. The bill would require the department to create a system to collect these delinquent fees and penalties from the seller or transferor. The bill would repeal the provision authorizing the department to collect the waived fees and penalties in a civil action. These provisions would become operative on January 1, 2030.

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

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

SECTION 1. Section 9562 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

9562. (a) When a transferee or purchaser of a vehicle applies for transfer of registration, as provided in Section 5902, and it is determined by the department that registration penalties accrued before the purchase of the vehicle, and that the transferee or purchaser was not cognizant of the nonpayment of the fees for registration for the current or prior registration years, the department may waive the registration penalties upon payment of the fees for registration due.

(b) Other provisions of this code notwithstanding, the director may, at their discretion, investigate into the circumstances of any application for registration to ascertain if penalties had accrued through no fault or intent of the owner. If the director determines that the circumstances justify it, the director may waive any penalties upon payment of the fees for registration then due.

(c) When a transferee or purchaser of a vehicle applies for transfer of registration of a vehicle, and it is determined by the department that fees for registration of the vehicle for any year are unpaid and due, that the fees became due before the transfer or purchase of the vehicle by the transferee or purchaser and that the transferee or purchaser was not cognizant of the fact that the fees were unpaid and due, the department may waive the fees and any penalty thereon if the license plate assigned to the vehicle displays a validating device issued by the department and the validating device contains the year number of the registration year for which the transferee or purchaser is requesting a waiver of fees and penalties.

(d) Upon the transfer of a vehicle for which fees for registration and any penalties thereon are unpaid and due, the fees and penalties are, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 6 (commencing with Section 9800) of this chapter, the personal debt of the transferor of the vehicle who did not pay the fees and penalties when they became due or accrued. The fees and penalties may be collected by the department in an appropriate civil action if the department has waived the fees and penalties pursuant to subdivision (c).

(e) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2030, and as of that date is repealed.

SEC. 2. Section 9562 is added to the Vehicle Code, to read:

9562. (a) When a transferee or purchaser of a vehicle applies for transfer of registration, as provided in Section 5902, and the department determines that registration fees for any year are unpaid and due, or that registration penalties have accrued, but the fees became due or the penalties accrued before the purchase of the vehicle, the department shall waive the delinquent registration fees and penalties.

(b) (1) Upon the transfer of a vehicle for which fees for registration and any penalties thereon are unpaid and due, the fees and penalties are, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 6 (commencing with Section 9800) of this chapter, the personal debt of the seller or transferor of the vehicle who did not pay the fees and penalties when they became due or accrued.

(2) The department shall create a system to collect these delinquent fees and penalties from the seller or transferor. The department shall collect the delinquent fees and penalties when the seller or transferor registers another car or applies for a renewal of a license.

(c) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2030.