

Transportation Committee

HB 1117

Brief Description: Amending motor vehicle laws to align with federal definitions, make technical corrections, and move an effective date to meet a federal timeline.

Sponsors: Representative Valdez; by request of Department of Licensing.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands authorization for the Department of Licensing to issue special armed forces license plates for vehicles that are not motor vehicles (such as trailers).
- Decreases the fee for a tow truck that is registered to a registered tow truck operator for a transporter's license plate indicator tab that will become available June 1, 2019, from \$25 to \$2.
- Increases the renewal registration fee for a commercial trailer from \$30 to \$34.
- Delays implementation of modifications to Commercial Driver's License (CDL) laws to correspond to a delay in a federal rule on requirements for tracking CDL medical certifications.

Hearing Date: 1/21/19

Staff: Jennifer Harris (786-7143).

Background:

Armed Forces License Plates.

The Department of Licensing (DOL) may issue special Armed Forces license plates for motor vehicles for the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, National Guard, and Navy. These license plates may be purchased by active military personnel, members of the National Guard, reservists, veterans, and families of veterans and service members.

Transporter License Plates.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A transporter's license is required to engage in the business of the delivery of vehicles registered in the state by the drive-away or tow-away method. The fee for an original transporter's license is \$25 and the fee for a renewal transporter's license is \$15.

Transporter license plates bearing an appropriate symbol and serial number must be attached to all vehicles being delivered or evaluated under the transporter's license. The plates may be obtained for a fee of \$2.

Until June 1, 2019, transporter's license plates must be conspicuously displayed on all vehicles being delivered by drive-away or tow-away methods or being driven on the public roads of the state for the purpose of repair evaluation. As of June 1, 2019, transporter's license plates or indicator tabs used by tow trucks owned by registered tow truck operators must be conspicuously displayed.

Effective June 1, 2019, if a tow truck owned by a registered tow truck operator is used to conduct transporter business, an indicator tab must be posted on a tow truck license plate indicating that the vehicle is licensed to perform transporter services. The fee for an original transporter's license plate indicator tab for a tow truck owned by a registered tow truck operator is \$25.

Commercial Trailer Renewal Registration Fees.

Initial and renewal vehicle registration fees are set by state law. Vehicle and vessel title and registration statutes were reorganized in Senate Bill 6379 (Chapter 161, Laws of 2010). At that time, the initial registration fee for commercial trailers was set at \$34 and the renewal registration fee for commercial trailers was set at \$30. Prior to the 2010 reorganization, the fees for the initial and renewal vehicle registration of commercial trailers were both set at \$34.

There are a number of other fees that must be paid as part of the annual commercial trailer vehicle registration process.

Commercial Driver's License Medical Certification Tracking.

Under federal law, a commercial driver's license (CDL) or commercial learner's permit (CLP) holder may not operate a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce unless he or she is medically certified as physically qualified to do so, unless he or she solely engages in certain exempted driving categories.

Federal law currently requires that a CDL or CLP holder carry the original or a copy of a current medical examiner's certificate indicating that he or she is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle. Earlier federal guidance communicated that, as of June 22, 2018, a CDL or CLP holder would no longer be required to carry on his or her person the medical examiner's certificate. Instead, by that date, an electronic copy of medical examiner's certifications was to be submitted by all medical examiners to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The FMCSA would then provide this information to the state, and the state would be required to post a medical qualification status of "certified" on the driver record in the Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS).

On June 21, 2018, an interim federal final rule delayed the compliance date for this change until June 22, 2021. This delay was needed because FMCSA determined that it would not be prepared to electronically transmit or receive medical certification information by the earlier deadline.

Substitute House Bill 2696 (Chapter 49, Laws of 2018), which is set to take effect April 30, 2019, eliminates the requirement that a commercial motor vehicle driver carry a medical examiner certificate on his or her person as valid proof of medical certification. Instead, the DOL is required to obtain an electronic copy of the medical examiner's certificate from the FMCSA and to post the medical status of the CDL or CLP holder to his or her CDLIS driver record.

Definition of Commercial Motor Vehicle.

A "commercial motor vehicle" is a motor vehicle that:

- has a gross combination weight rating or gross combination weight of 26,001 pounds or more, whichever is greater, inclusive of a towed unit or units with a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of more than 10,000 pounds;
- has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of 26,001 pounds or more, whichever is greater;
- is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or
- is of any size and is used in the transportation of hazardous materials as defined under federal law.

Summary of Bill:

Armed Forces License Plates.

The DOL may issue special Armed Forces license plates for vehicles that are not motor vehicles, that is, for trailers and campers.

Transporter License Plates.

The fee for an original transporter's license plate indicator tab for a tow truck owned by a registered tow truck operator is \$2, equal to the fee for a transporter license plate. The law is made consistent to clarify that an indicator tab may be used by these vehicles in place of a transporter license plate.

Commercial Trailer Renewal Registration Fees.

The renewal registration fee for commercial trailers is \$34.

Commercial Driver's License Medical Certification Tracking.

The elimination of the requirement that CDL and CLP holders carry documentation of valid medical certification, and the requirement that DOL electronically track this information in the CDLIS, does not take effect until June 1, 2020.

Definition of Commercial Motor Vehicle.

Minor technical corrections are made to the definition of "commercial motor vehicle." No substantive changes are made to this definition.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 8, relating to CDL medical certifications, which takes effect April 30, 2019, and sections 6 and 7, relating to tow trucks used as transporter vehicles, which take effect June 1, 2019. The bill contains two emergency clauses for these sections.