

Senate Bill No. 1590

CHAPTER 766

An act to amend Sections 1656.2, 12517.1, 13369, 16000, 16000.1, 16075, 16251, 16377, 16430, and 16434 of the Vehicle Code, relating to motor vehicles.

[Approved by Governor September 20, 2002. Filed with Secretary of State September 21, 2002.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1590, Karnette. Motor vehicles: reportable property damage minimum.

Existing law requires the driver of every motor vehicle who is involved in an accident that has resulted in damage to the property of any one person in excess of \$500 or in bodily injury or in the death of any person to report the accident to the Department of Motor Vehicles within 10 days after the accident, as specified.

This bill would increase the minimum property damage that is required to be reported to \$750. The bill would make conforming changes to related provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1656.2 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

1656.2. The department shall prepare and publish a printed summary describing the penalties for noncompliance with Sections 16000 and 16028, which shall be included with each motor vehicle registration, registration renewal, and transfer of registration and with each driver's license and license renewal. The printed summary may contain, but is not limited to, the following wording:

“IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT ENFORCEMENT OF CALIFORNIA'S COMPULSORY FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY LAW

California law requires every driver to carry written evidence of valid automobile liability insurance, a thirty-five thousand dollar (\$35,000) bond, a thirty-five thousand dollar (\$35,000) cash deposit, or a certificate of self-insurance that has been issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

You must provide evidence of financial responsibility when you renew the registration of a motor vehicle, and after you are cited by a peace officer for a traffic violation or are involved in any traffic accident. The law requires that you provide the officer with the name and address of your insurer and the policy identification number. Your insurer will provide written evidence of this number. Failure to provide evidence of your financial responsibility can result in fines of up to five hundred dollars (\$500) and loss of your driver's license. Falsification of evidence can result in fines of up to seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) or 30 days in jail, or both, in addition to a one-year suspension of driving privileges.

Under existing California law, if you are involved in an accident that results in damages of over seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) to the property of any person or in any injury or fatality, you must file a report of the accident with the Department of Motor Vehicles within 10 days of the accident. If you fail to file a report or fail to provide evidence of financial responsibility on the report, your driving privilege will be suspended for up to four years. Your suspension notice will notify you of the department's action and of your right to a hearing. Your suspension notice will also inform you that if you request a hearing, it must be conducted within 30 days of your written request, and that a decision is to be rendered within 15 days of the conclusion of the hearing."

SEC. 2. Section 12517.1 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

12517.1. (a) A "schoolbus accident" means any of the following:

(1) A motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) or personal injury, on public or private property, and involving a schoolbus, youth bus, school pupil activity bus, or general public paratransit vehicle transporting a pupil.

(2) A collision between a vehicle and a pupil or a schoolbus driver while the pupil or driver is crossing the highway when the schoolbus flashing red signal lamps are required to be operated pursuant to Section 22112.

(3) Injury of a pupil inside a vehicle described in paragraph (1) as a result of acceleration, deceleration, or other movement of the vehicle.

(b) The Department of the California Highway Patrol shall investigate all schoolbus accidents, except that accidents involving only property damage and occurring entirely on private property shall be investigated only if they involve a violation of this code.

SEC. 3. Section 13369 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

13369. This section applies to the following endorsements and certificates: passenger transport vehicle, hazardous materials,



schoolbus, school pupil activity bus, youth bus, general public paratransit vehicle, farm labor vehicle, and vehicle used for the transportation of developmentally disabled persons.

(a) The department shall refuse to issue or renew, or shall revoke for any of the following causes, the certificate or endorsement of any person who:

(1) Within the preceding three years, has committed any violation which results in a conviction assigned a violation point count of two or more, as defined in Sections 12810 and 12810.5. The department shall not refuse to issue or renew, nor shall it revoke a person's hazardous materials or passenger transportation vehicle endorsement if the violation leading to the conviction occurred in the person's private vehicle and not in a commercial motor vehicle, as defined in Section 15210.

(2) Within the preceding three years, has had his or her driving privilege suspended, revoked, or on probation for any reason involving unsafe operation of a motor vehicle. The department shall not refuse to issue or renew, nor shall it revoke, a person's hazardous materials or passenger transportation vehicle endorsement if the person's driving privilege has, within the preceding three years, been placed on probation only for any reason involving unsafe operation of a motor vehicle, or if Section 13353.6 applies.

(b) The department may refuse to issue or renew, or may suspend or revoke the certificate or endorsement of any person who:

(1) Within the preceding 12 months, has been involved as a driver in three accidents in which the driver caused or contributed to the causes of the accidents.

(2) Within the preceding 24 months, as a driver, caused or contributed to the cause of an accident resulting in a fatality or serious injury or serious property damage in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750).

(3) Has violated any provision of this code, or any rule or regulation pertaining to the safe operation of a vehicle for which the certificate or endorsement was issued.

(4) Has violated any restriction of the certificate, endorsement, or commercial driver's license.

(5) Has knowingly made a false statement or concealed a material fact on an application for a certificate or endorsement.

(6) Has been determined by the department to be a negligent or incompetent operator.

(7) Has demonstrated irrational behavior to the extent that a reasonable and prudent person would have reasonable cause to believe that the applicant's ability to perform the duties of a driver may be impaired.



(8) Excessively or habitually uses, or is addicted to, alcoholic beverages, narcotics, or dangerous drugs.

(9) Does not meet the minimum medical standards established or approved by the department.

(c) The department may cancel the certificate or endorsement of any driver who:

(1) Does not have a valid license of the appropriate class.

(2) Has requested cancellation of the certificate or endorsement.

(3) Has failed to meet any of the requirements for issuance or retention of the certificate or endorsement, including, but not limited to, payment of the proper fee, submission of an acceptable medical report and fingerprint cards, and failure to meet prescribed training requirements.

(4) Has had his or her driving privilege suspended or revoked for a cause involving other than the safe operation of a motor vehicle.

(d) With regard to a violation, accident, or departmental action which occurred prior to January 1, 1991, subdivision (a) and paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of subdivision (b) do not apply to a driver holding a valid passenger transport or hazardous materials endorsement, or a valid class 1 or class 2 license who is applying to convert that license to a class A or class B license with a passenger transport or hazardous materials endorsement, if the driver submits proof that he or she is currently employed operating vehicles requiring the endorsement, or a valid class 3 license who is applying for a class C license with a hazardous materials endorsement if the driver submits proof that he or she is currently employed operating vehicles requiring the endorsement.

(e) Subdivision (d) does not apply to drivers applying for a schoolbus, school pupil activity bus, youth bus, general public paratransit vehicle, or farm labor vehicle certificate.

(f) (1) Reapplication following denial or revocation under subdivision (a) or (b) may be made after a period of not less than one year from the effective date of denial or revocation, except in cases where a longer period of suspension or revocation is required by law.

(2) Reapplication following cancellation under subdivision (d) may be made any time without prejudice.

SEC. 4. Section 16000 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

16000. (a) The driver of every motor vehicle who is in any manner involved in an accident originating from the operation of a motor vehicle on any street or highway or any reportable off-highway accident defined in Section 16000.1 that has resulted in damage to the property of any one person in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) or in bodily injury or in the death of any person shall, within 10 days after the accident, report the accident, either personally or through an insurance agent,



broker, or legal representative, on a form approved by the department to the office of the department at Sacramento, subject to the provisions of this chapter. The driver shall identify on the form, by name and current residence address, if available, any person involved in the accident complaining of bodily injury.

(b) A report is not required pursuant to subdivision (a) if the motor vehicle involved in the accident was owned or leased by, or under the direction of, the United States, this state, another state, or a local agency.

SEC. 5. Section 16000.1 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

16000.1. (a) For purposes of this division, a “reportable off-highway accident” means an accident which includes all of the following:

- (1) Occurs off the street or highway.
- (2) Involves a vehicle that is subject to registration under this code.
- (3) Results in damages to the property of any one person in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) or in bodily injury or in the death of any person.

(b) A “reportable off-highway accident” does not include any accident which occurs off-highway in which damage occurs only to the property of the driver or owner of the motor vehicle and no bodily injury or death of a person occurs.

SEC. 6. Section 16075 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

16075. (a) The suspension provisions of this article shall not apply to a driver or owner until 30 days after the department sends to the driver or owner notice of its intent to suspend his or her driving privilege, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 16070, and advises the driver or owner of his or her right to a hearing as hereinafter provided.

(b) If the driver or owner receiving the notice of intent to suspend wishes to have a hearing, the request for a hearing shall be made in writing to the department within 10 days of the receipt of the notice. Failure to respond to a notice of intent within 10 days of receipt of the notice is a waiver of the person’s right to a hearing.

(c) If the driver or owner makes a timely request for a hearing, the department shall hold the hearing before the effective date of the suspension to determine the applicability of this chapter to the driver or owner, including a determination of whether:

(1) The accident has resulted in property damage in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750), or bodily injury, or death.

(2) The driver or owner has established financial responsibility, as provided in Article 3 (commencing with Section 16050), was in effect at the time of the accident.

(d) A request for a hearing does not stay the suspension of a person’s driving privilege. However, if the department does not conduct a hearing



and make a determination pursuant thereto within the time limit provided in subdivision (b) of Section 16070, the department shall stay the effective date of the order of suspension pending a determination.

(e) The hearing provided for by this section shall be held in the county of residence of the person requesting the hearing. The hearing shall be conducted pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 14100) of Chapter 3 of Division 6.

(f) The department shall render its decision within 15 days after conclusion of the hearing.

SEC. 7. Section 16251 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

16251. As used in this chapter and Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 16430), “cause of action” means any cause of action for damage to property in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) or for damage in any amount on account of bodily injury to or death of any person resulting from the operation by the defendant or any other person of any motor vehicle upon a highway in this state, except a cause of action based upon statutory liability by reason of signing the application of a minor for a driver’s license.

SEC. 8. Section 16377 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

16377. Every judgment shall for the purposes of this chapter be deemed satisfied:

(a) When fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) has been credited, upon any judgment in excess of that amount, or upon all judgments, collectively, which together total in excess of that amount, for personal injury to or death of one person as a result of any one accident.

(b) When, subject to the limit of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) as to one person, the sum of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) has been credited, upon any judgment in excess of that amount, or upon all judgments, collectively, which together total in excess of that amount, for personal injury to or death of more than one person as a result of any one accident.

(c) When five thousand dollars (\$5,000) has been credited, upon any judgment in excess of that amount, or upon all judgments, collectively, each of which is in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750), and which together total in excess of five thousand dollars (\$5,000), for damage to property of others as a result of any one accident.

(d) When the judgment debtor or a person designated by him or her has deposited with the department a sum equal to the amount of the unsatisfied judgment for which the suspension action was taken and presents proof, satisfactory to the department, of inability to locate the judgment creditor.

SEC. 9. Section 16430 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:



16430. Proof of financial responsibility when required by this code means proof of financial responsibility resulting from the ownership or operation of a motor vehicle and arising by reason of personal injury to, or death of, any one person, of at least fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000), and, subject to the limit of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) for each person injured or killed, of at least thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) for the injury to, or the death of, two or more persons in any one accident, and for damages to property (in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750)), of at least five thousand dollars (\$5,000) resulting from any one accident. Proof of financial responsibility may be given in any manner authorized in this chapter.

SEC. 10. Section 16434 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

16434. Proof of financial responsibility may be given by a bond. The bond shall be conditioned for the payment of the amount specified in Section 16430, and shall provide for the entry of judgment on motion of the state in favor of any holder of any final judgment on account of damages to property over seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) in amount, or injury to any person caused by the operation of the person's motor vehicle.

