Chapter 46.16A RCW
REGISTRATION

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GENERAL PROVISIONS

RCW 46.16A.010 Definitions. For the purposes of this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

(1) "Commercial motor vehicle," for the purposes of requiring a department of transportation number, means the same as defined in RCW 46.25.010(6), or a motor vehicle used in commerce when the motor vehicle: (a) Has a gross vehicle weight rating of 11,794 kilograms or

more (26,001 pounds or more) inclusive of a towed unit or units of a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 4,536 kilograms (10,000 pounds); (b) has a gross vehicle weight rating of 11,794 kilograms or more (26,001 pounds or more); or (c) is used in the transportation of hazardous materials, as defined in RCW 46.25.010(13);

(2) "Department of transportation number" means a department of transportation number from the federal motor carrier safety administration;

(3) "Interstate commercial motor vehicle" means a commercial vehicle that operates in more than one state;

(4) "Intrastate commercial motor vehicle" means a commercial vehicle that operates exclusively within the state of Washington;

(5) "Motor carrier" means a person or entity who has been issued a department of transportation number and who owns a commercial motor vehicle;

(6) "Registration year" means the effective period of a vehicle registration issued by the department. A registration year begins at 12:01 a.m. on the date of the calendar year designated by the department and ends at 12:00 a.m. the same day the following year unless otherwise specified;

(7) "Renewal notice" means the notice to renew a vehicle registration sent to the registered owner by the department. [2019 c 44 s 1; 2010 c 161 s 401; 2007 c 419 s 3. Formerly RCW 46.16.004.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Findings—2007 c 419: "The legislature finds and declares that it is the policy of the state of Washington to prevent the loss of human lives and the loss of property and vehicles, and to protect the traveling environment of the state of Washington through sound and consistent regulatory provisions for interstate and intrastate motor carriers.

The legislature further finds and declares that it is a policy of the state of Washington to require commercial motor vehicles operating on state roadways to comply with rigorous federal and state safety regulations. The legislature also finds that intrastate and interstate commercial motor vehicles should comply with consistent state and federal commercial vehicle regulations." [2007 c 419 s 1.]

Short title—2007 c 419: "This act may be known and cited as the Tony Qamar and Daniel Johnson act." [2007 c 419 s 2.]

RCW 46.16A.020 Registration year assigned—Registration month—Registration period—When registration does not expire. (1) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director shall assign a new registration year to a vehicle if:

(a) The registered ownership of the vehicle is being transferred, except as provided in subsection (4) of this section. The renewed vehicle registration is valid for a full twelve-month period unless: (i) The vehicle changes ownership during the twelve-month period, in which case the registration expires; or (ii) a specific expiration date is required by law, rule, or program; or

(b) The Washington vehicle registration has expired and the registered owner:

(i) Is a member of the United States armed forces;

(ii) Was stationed outside of Washington under military orders during the prior vehicle registration year; and

(iii) Provides the department a copy of the military orders.

(2) Each registration year may be divided into twelve registration months. Each registration month begins at 12:01 a.m. on a day of the month assigned by the department and ends at 12:00 a.m. on the same day the following month.

(3) A registration period extends through the end of the next business day when the final day of a registration year or month falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.

(4) A vehicle registration does not expire when a change in vehicle ownership is the result of one or more of the following circumstances:

(a) When adding a lienholder to the certificate of title or removing a lienholder from the certificate of title;

(b) When a vehicle is transferred from one spouse or registered domestic partner to another;

(c) When removing a deceased spouse or registered domestic partner from the certificate of title;

(d) When a vehicle is transferred by gift or inheritance to one or more members of the registered owner's immediate family;

(e) When a vehicle is transferred into or out of a trust in which the registered owner or one or more immediate family members of the registered owner is the beneficiary;

(f) When a leaseholder buys out the leased vehicle; or

(g) When a person changes his or her name. [2014 c 80 s 2; 2010 c 161 s 402; 2009 c 159 s 1; 1992 c 222 s 1; 1983 c 27 s 1; 1981 c 214 s 1; 1975 1st ex.s. c 118 s 1. Formerly RCW 46.16.006.]

Application—2014 c 80: See note following RCW 46.16A.200.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective date—1975 1st ex.s. c 118: "This 1975 amendatory act shall take effect on January 1, 1977: PROVIDED, That the director of the department of motor vehicles may, prior to such effective date, undertake and perform duties and conduct activities necessary for the timely implementation of this 1975 amendatory act on such date." [1975 1st ex.s. c 118 s 19.]

Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 118: "If any provision of this 1975 amendatory act is declared unconstitutional, or the applicability thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the constitutionality of the remainder of this 1975 amendatory act and the applicability thereof to persons and circumstances shall not be affected thereby." [1975 1st ex.s. c 118 s 18.]

RCW 46.16A.025 Adjustment of vehicle registration periods to stagger renewal periods. The department may by rule extend or reduce vehicle registration periods for the purpose of staggering renewal

periods. The rules may exclude any classes or classifications of vehicles from the staggered renewal system and may provide for the gradual introduction of classes or classifications of vehicles into the system. The rules shall provide for the collection of proportionately increased or decreased vehicle license fees and of excise or property taxes required to be paid at the time of registration.

It is the intent of the legislature that there shall be neither a significant net gain nor loss of revenue to the state general fund or the motor vehicle fund as the result of implementing and maintaining a staggered vehicle registration system. [2010 c 161 s 431; 1986 c 18 s 15; 1979 c 158 s 140; 1975 1st ex.s. c 118 s 2. Formerly RCW 46.16.225.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective date—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 118: See notes following RCW 46.16A.020.

RCW 46.16A.030 Registration and display of plates required—Penalties—Expired registration, impoundment. (1) Vehicles must be registered as required by this chapter and must display license plates or decals assigned by the department.

(2) It is unlawful for a person to operate any vehicle on a public highway of this state without having in full force and effect a current and proper vehicle registration and displaying license plates on the vehicle.

(3) Vehicle license plates or registration certificates, whether original issues or duplicates, may not be issued or furnished by the department until the applicant makes satisfactory application for a certificate of title or presents satisfactory evidence that a certificate of title covering the vehicle has been previously issued.

(4) Failure to make initial registration before operating a vehicle on the public highways of this state is a traffic infraction. A person committing this infraction must pay a fine of five hundred twenty-nine dollars, which may not be suspended or reduced. This fine is in addition to any delinquent taxes and fees that must be deposited and distributed in the same manner as if the taxes and fees were properly paid in a timely fashion. The five hundred twenty-nine dollar fine must be deposited into the vehicle licensing fraud account created in the state treasury in RCW 46.68.250.

(5) Failure to renew an expired registration before operating a vehicle on the public highways of this state is a traffic infraction.

(6) It is a gross misdemeanor for a resident, as identified in RCW 46.16A.140, to register a vehicle in another state, evading the payment of any tax or vehicle license fee imposed in connection with registration. It is punishable, in lieu of the fine in subsection (4) of this section, as follows:

(a) For a first offense:

(i) Up to three hundred sixty-four days in the county jail;

(ii) Payment of a fine of five hundred twenty-nine dollars plus any applicable assessments, which may not be suspended or reduced. The fine of five hundred twenty-nine dollars must be deposited into the

vehicle licensing fraud account created in the state treasury in RCW 46.68.250;

(iii) A fine of one thousand dollars to be deposited into the vehicle licensing fraud account created in the state treasury in RCW 46.68.250, which may not be suspended or reduced; and

(iv) The delinquent taxes and fees, which must be deposited and distributed in the same manner as if the taxes and fees were properly paid in a timely fashion, and which may not be suspended or reduced;

(b) For a second or subsequent offense:

(i) Up to three hundred sixty-four days in the county jail;

(ii) Payment of a fine of five hundred twenty-nine dollars plus any applicable assessments, which may not be suspended or reduced, except as provided in RCW 10.05.180. The fine of five hundred twenty-nine dollars must be deposited into the vehicle licensing fraud account created in the state treasury in RCW 46.68.250;

(iii) A fine of five thousand dollars to be deposited into the vehicle licensing fraud account created in the state treasury in RCW 46.68.250, which may not be suspended or reduced; and

(iv) The amount of delinquent taxes and fees, which must be deposited and distributed in the same manner as if the taxes and fees were properly paid in a timely fashion, and which may not be suspended or reduced.

(7) A vehicle with an expired registration of more than forty-five days parked on a public street may be impounded by a police officer under RCW 46.55.113(2). [2019 c 459 s 3; 2019 c 423 s 203. Prior: 2011 c 171 s 43; 2011 c 96 s 31; prior: 2010 c 270 s 1; 2010 c 217 s 5; 2010 c 161 s 403; 2007 c 242 s 2; 2006 c 212 s 1; prior: 2005 c 350 s 1; 2005 c 323 s 2; 2005 c 213 s 6; prior: 2003 c 353 s 8; 2003 c 53 s 238; 2000 c 229 s 1; 1999 c 277 s 4; prior: 1997 c 328 s 2; 1997 c 241 s 13; 1996 c 184 s 1; 1993 c 238 s 1; 1991 c 163 s 1; 1989 c 192 s 2; 1986 c 186 s 1; 1977 ex.s. c 148 s 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 17 s 2; 1972 ex.s. c 5 s 2; 1969 c 27 s 3; 1967 c 202 s 2; 1963 ex.s. c 3 s 51; 1961 ex.s. c 21 s 32; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.010; prior: 1955 c 265 s 1; 1947 c 33 s 1; 1937 c 188 s 15; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6312-15; 1929 c 99 s 5; RRS s 6324. Formerly RCW 46.16.010.]

Rules of court: *Monetary penalty schedule—IRLJ 6.2.*

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2019 c 423 s 203 and by 2019 c 459 s 3, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Finding—Intent—2019 c 459: See note following RCW 10.05.180.

Finding—Intent—Effective date—2019 c 423: See notes following RCW 82.08.0273.

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Findings—Intent—2011 c 96: See note following RCW 9A.20.021.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective date—2005 c 350: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 9, 2005]." [2005 c 350 s 2.]

Declaration and intent—2005 c 323: "When a person establishes residency in this state, unless otherwise exempt by statute, the person must register any vehicles to be operated on public highways, and pay all required licensing fees and taxes. Washington residents must renew vehicle registrations annually as well. The intent of this act is to increase the monetary penalties associated with failure to properly register vehicles in the state of Washington." [2005 c 323 s 1.]

Effective date—2005 c 323: "This act takes effect August 1, 2005." [2005 c 323 s 4.]

Application—2005 c 323: "This act applies to registrations due or to become due on or after January 1, 2006." [2005 c 323 s 5.]

Findings—Construction—Effective date—2005 c 213: See notes following RCW 46.09.300.

Effective date—2003 c 353: See note following RCW 46.04.320.

Intent—Effective date—2003 c 53: See notes following RCW 2.48.180.

Effective date—2000 c 229: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 30, 2000]." [2000 c 229 s 9.]

Effective date—1996 c 184 ss 1-6: "Sections 1 through 6 of this act take effect January 1, 1997." [1996 c 184 s 8.]

Legislative intent—1989 c 192: "The legislature recognizes that there are residents of this state who intentionally register motor vehicles in other states to evade payment of taxes and fees required by the laws of this state. This results in a substantial loss of revenue to the state. It is the intent of the legislature to impose a stronger criminal penalty upon those residents who defraud the state, thereby enhancing compliance with the registration laws of this state and further enhancing enforcement and collection efforts.

In order to encourage voluntary compliance with the registration laws of this state, administrative penalties associated with failing to register a motor vehicle are waived until September 1, 1989. It is not the intent of the legislature to waive traffic infraction or criminal traffic violations imposed prior to July 23, 1989." [1989 c 192 s 1.]

Effective date—1989 c 192 s 2: "Section 2 of this act shall take effect September 1, 1989." [1989 c 192 s 3.]

RCW 46.16A.040 Original registration—Application—Form and contents. (1) An owner or the owner's authorized representative must apply for an original vehicle registration to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director on a form furnished by the department. The application must contain:

(a) A description of the vehicle, including its make, model, vehicle identification number, type of body, and power to be used;

(b) The name and address of the person who is the registered owner of the vehicle and, if the vehicle is subject to a security interest, the name and address of the secured party;

(c) The purpose for which the vehicle is to be used;

(d) The licensed gross weight for the vehicle, which is:

(i) The adult seating capacity, including the operator, as provided for in RCW 46.16A.455(1) if the vehicle will be operated as a for hire vehicle or auto stage and has a seating capacity of more than six; or

(ii) The gross weight declared by the applicant as required in RCW 46.16A.455(2) if the vehicle will be operated as a motor truck, tractor, or truck tractor;

(e) The empty scale weight of the vehicle; and

(f) Other information that the department may require.

(2) The registered owner or the registered owner's authorized representative shall sign the application for an original vehicle registration and certify that the statements on the application are true to the best of the applicant's knowledge.

(3) The application for an original vehicle registration must be accompanied by a draft, money order, certified bank check, or cash for all fees and taxes due for the application for an original vehicle registration.

(4) Whenever any person, after applying for or receiving a vehicle registration, moves from the address named in the application or in the registration issued to him or her, or changes his or her name of record, the person shall, within ten days thereafter, notify the department of the name or address change as provided in RCW 46.08.195. [2017 c 147 s 4; 2010 c 161 s 413; 1987 c 244 s 2; 1975 c 25 s 15; 1969 ex.s. c 170 s 2. Prior: 1967 ex.s. c 83 s 59; 1967 c 32 s 16; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.040; prior: 1947 c 164 s 8; 1937 c 188 s 29; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6312-29; 1921 c 96 s 5; 1919 c 178 s 1; 1919 c 59 s 4; 1915 c 142 s 5; RRS s 6316. Formerly RCW 46.16.040.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective dates—1967 ex.s. c 83: See RCW 47.26.910.

RCW 46.16A.050 Registration—Requirements before issuance—Penalty—Rules. (1) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director shall not issue an initial registration certificate for a motor vehicle to a natural person under this chapter unless the natural person at time of application:

(a) Presents an unexpired Washington state driver's license; or

(b) Certifies that he or she is:

(i) A Washington state resident who does not operate a motor vehicle on public roads; or

(ii) Exempt from the requirement to obtain a Washington state driver's license under RCW 46.20.025.

(2) The department must set up procedures to verify that all owners meet the requirements of this section.

(3) A person falsifying residency is guilty of a gross misdemeanor punishable only by a fine of five hundred twenty-nine dollars.

(4) The department may adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including rules under which a natural person applying for registration may be exempt from the requirements of this section if the person provides evidence satisfactory to the department that he or she has a valid and compelling reason for not being able to meet the requirements of this section. [2014 c 197 s 1; 2010 c 161 s 405.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.060 Registration—Emission control inspections required—Exemptions—Educational information—Rules. (1) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director may not issue or renew a motor vehicle registration or change the registered owner of a registered vehicle for any motor vehicle required to be inspected under chapter 70A.25 RCW, unless the application for issuance or renewal is: (a) Accompanied by a valid certificate of compliance or a valid certificate of acceptance issued as required under chapter 70A.25 RCW; or (b) exempt, as described in subsection (2) of this section. The certificates must have a date of validation that is within twelve months of the assigned registration renewal date. Certificates for fleet or owner tested diesel vehicles may have a date of validation that is within twelve months of the assigned registration renewal date.

(2) The following motor vehicles are exempt from emission test requirements:

(a) Motor vehicles that are less than five years old or more than twenty-five years old;

(b) Motor vehicles that are a 2009 model year or newer;

(c) Motor vehicles powered exclusively by electricity, propane, compressed natural gas, liquefied natural gas, or liquid petroleum gas;

(d) Motorcycles as defined in RCW 46.04.330 and motor-driven cycles as defined in RCW 46.04.332;

(e) Farm vehicles as defined in RCW 46.04.181;

(f) Street rod vehicles as defined in RCW 46.04.572 and custom vehicles as defined in RCW 46.04.161;

(g) Used vehicles that are offered for sale by a motor vehicle dealer licensed under chapter 46.70 RCW;

(h) Classes of motor vehicles exempted by the director of the department of ecology;

(i) Hybrid motor vehicles that obtain a rating by the environmental protection agency of at least fifty miles per gallon of gas during city driving. For purposes of this section, a hybrid motor vehicle is one that uses propulsion units powered by both electricity and gas; and

(j) Collectible vehicles as defined in RCW 46.04.123.

(3) The department of ecology must provide information to motor vehicle owners:

(a) Regarding the boundaries of emission contributing areas and restrictions established under this section that apply to vehicles registered in such areas; and

(b) On the relationship between motor vehicles and air pollution and steps motor vehicle owners should take to reduce motor vehicle related air pollution.

(4) The department of licensing must:

(a) Notify all registered motor vehicle owners affected by the emission testing program that they must have an emission test to renew their registration;

(b) Adopt rules implementing and enforcing this section, except for subsection (2)(e) of this section, as specified in chapter 34.05 RCW.

(5) A motor vehicle may not be registered, leased, rented, or sold for use in the state, starting with the model year as provided in RCW 70A.30.010, unless the vehicle:

(a) Has seven thousand five hundred miles or more; or

(b)(i) Is consistent with the vehicle emission standards and carbon dioxide equivalent emission standards adopted by the department of ecology; and

(ii) Has a California certification label for all emission standards, and carbon dioxide equivalent emission standards necessary to meet fleet average requirements.

(6) The department of licensing, in consultation with the department of ecology, may adopt rules necessary to implement this section and may provide for reasonable exemptions to these requirements. The department of ecology may exempt public safety vehicles from meeting the standards where the department finds that vehicles necessary to meet the needs of public safety agencies are not otherwise reasonably available. [2021 c 65 s 50. Prior: 2014 c 216 s 207; 2014 c 72 s 1; 2011 c 114 s 6; 2010 c 161 s 406; 2002 c 24 s 1; 1998 c 342 s 6; 1991 c 199 s 209; 1990 c 42 s 318; 1989 c 240 s 1; 1985 c 7 s 111; prior: 1983 c 238 s 1; 1983 c 237 s 3; 1980 c 176 s 1; 1979 ex.s. c 163 s 11. Formerly RCW 46.16.015.]

Explanatory statement—2021 c 65: See note following RCW 53.54.030.

Effective date—Findings—Tax preference performance statement—2014 c 216: See notes following RCW 82.38.030.

Effective date—2011 c 114: See note following RCW 46.04.572.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Finding—1991 c 199: See note following RCW 70A.15.1005.

Effective dates—1991 c 199: See RCW 70A.15.9003.

Purpose—Effective dates—Application—Implementation—1990 c 42: See notes following RCW 46.68.090.

Effective date—1989 c 240: See RCW 70A.25.900.

Severability—1983 c 238: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1983 c 238 s 3.]

Legislative finding—1983 c 237: See note following RCW 46.37.467.

Effective date—1979 ex.s. c 163 s 11: "Section 11 of this act shall take effect on January 1, 1982. The director of the department of licensing and the director of the department of ecology are authorized to take immediately such steps as are necessary to ensure that section 11 of this act is implemented on its effective date." [1979 ex.s. c 163 s 16.]

Severability—1979 ex.s. c 163: See note following RCW 70A.25.010.

RCW 46.16A.070 Registration—Cancellation, refusal, etc.—Appeals—Failure to respond to request for information regarding collector vehicle insurance, use. (1) The department may refuse to issue or may cancel a registration certificate at any time when the department determines that an applicant for registration is not entitled to a registration certificate. Notice of cancellation may be accomplished by sending a notice by first-class mail using the last known address in department records for the registered or legal owner or owners, and completing an affidavit of first-class mail. It is unlawful for any person to remove, drive, or operate the vehicle until a proper registration certificate has been issued. A person removing, driving, or operating a vehicle after the refusal to issue or cancellation of the registration is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

(2)(a) The suspension, revocation, cancellation, or refusal by the director of a registration certificate provided under this chapter is conclusive unless the person whose registration or certificate is suspended, revoked, canceled, or refused appeals to the superior court of Thurston county or the person's county of residence.

(b) Notice of appeal must be filed within 10 days after receipt of the notice of suspension, revocation, cancellation, or refusal. Upon the filing of the notice of appeal, the court shall issue an order to the director to show cause why the registration should not be granted or reinstated and return the order not less than 10 days after the date of service to the director. Service must be in the same manner as prescribed for the service of a summons and complaint in other civil actions.

(c) Upon the hearing on the order to show cause, the court shall hear evidence concerning matters with reference to the suspension, revocation, cancellation, or refusal of the registration and shall enter judgment either affirming or setting aside the suspension, revocation, cancellation, or refusal.

(3) The department may cancel the registration of a vehicle registered under RCW 46.18.220 if the registered owner fails to respond to a request for information from the department regarding collector vehicle insurance and whether collector plates are in use,

within 45 days. The request for information shall include a statement with the necessary information and deadline for compliance, as well as the consequences of failure to respond to the request for information. [2025 c 332 s 5; 2011 c 171 s 44; 2010 c 161 s 414.]

Effective date—2025 c 332: See note following RCW 46.18.255.

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.080 Registration—Exemptions. The following vehicles are not required to be registered under this chapter:

(1) Converter gears used to convert a semitrailer into a trailer or a two-axle truck or tractor into a three or more axle truck or tractor or used in any other manner to increase the number of axles of a vehicle;

(2) Electric-assisted bicycles;

(3)(a) Farm vehicles operated within a radius of twenty-five miles of the farm where it is principally used or garaged for the purposes of traveling between farms or other locations to engage in activities that support farming operations, (b) farm tractors and farm implements including trailers designed as cook or bunk houses used exclusively for animal herding temporarily operating or drawn upon the public highways, and (c) trailers used exclusively to transport farm implements from one farm to another during daylight hours or at night when the trailer is equipped with lights that comply with applicable law;

(4) Forklifts operated during daylight hours on public highways adjacent to and within five hundred feet of the warehouses they serve;

(5) Golf carts, as defined in RCW 46.04.1945, operating within a designated golf cart zone as described in RCW 46.08.175;

(6) Motor vehicles operated solely within a national recreation area that is not accessible by a state highway, including motorcycles, motor homes, passenger cars, and sport utility vehicles. This exemption applies only after initial registration;

(7) Motorized foot scooters;

(8) Nurse rigs or equipment auxiliary for the use of and designed or modified for the fueling, repairing, or loading of spray and fertilizer applicator rigs and not used, designed, or modified primarily for the purpose of transportation;

(9) Off-road vehicles operated on a street, road, or highway as authorized under RCW 46.09.360, or nonhighway roads under RCW 46.09.450;

(10) Special highway construction equipment;

(11) Dump trucks and tractor-dump trailer combinations that are:

(a) Designed and used primarily for construction work on highways;

(b) Not designed or used primarily for the transportation of persons or property on a public highway; and

(c) Only incidentally operated or moved over the highways;

(12) Spray or fertilizer applicator rigs designed and used exclusively for spraying or fertilization in the conduct of agricultural operations and not primarily for the purpose of transportation;

(13) Tow dollies;

(14) Trams used for transporting persons to and from facilities related to the horse racing industry as regulated in chapter 67.16 RCW, as long as the public right-of-way routes over which the trams operate are not more than one mile from end to end, the public rights-of-way over which the tram operates have average daily traffic of not more than fifteen thousand vehicles per day, and the activity is in conformity with federal law. The operator must be a licensed driver and at least eighteen years old. For the purposes of this section, "tram" also means a vehicle, or combination of vehicles linked together with a single mode of propulsion, used to transport persons from one location to another;

(15) Vehicles used by the state parks and recreation commission exclusively for park maintenance and operations upon public highways within state parks; and

(16) Vehicles shipped as marine cargo, if:

(a) The vehicles are operated:

(i) From wharves to and from storage areas or terminals owned by a public port established according to chapter 53.04 RCW; or

(ii) Between storage areas or terminals owned by a public port established according to chapter 53.04 RCW; and

(b) At least part of the operation takes place on public roadways connecting facilities of a single public port. [2019 c 94 s 2; 2013 c 299 s 2; 2011 c 171 s 45; 2010 c 161 s 404.]

Findings—2019 c 94: "(1) The legislature finds forty percent of jobs in Washington state are connected to international trade.

(2) The legislature also finds that:

(a) Washington state ports serve as major intermodal hubs for vehicles both imported to and exported from the United States, supporting both manufacturing and logistics jobs;

(b) Vehicles shipped as marine cargo are not registered until purchased by the end user; and

(c) To efficiently move unregistered vehicles shipped as marine cargo between port-owned marine terminals, storage lots, and vehicle processing facilities, they must operate on public roadways." [2019 c 94 s 1.]

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.090 Registration—Voluntary and opt-out donations—Discover pass. (1) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director must provide an opportunity for a vehicle owner to make a voluntary donation as provided in this section when applying for an initial or renewal vehicle registration.

(2)(a) A vehicle owner who registers a vehicle under this chapter may donate one dollar or more to the organ and tissue donation awareness account to promote the donation of organs and tissues under the uniform anatomical gift act as described in chapter 68.64 RCW. The donation of one or more dollars is voluntary and may be refused by the vehicle owner.

(b) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director must:

(i) Ask a vehicle owner applying for a vehicle registration if the owner would like to donate one dollar or more;

(ii) Inform a vehicle owner of the option for organ and tissue donations as required under RCW 46.20.113; and

(iii) Make information booklets or other informational material available regarding the importance of organ and tissue donations to vehicle owners.

(c) All reasonable costs associated with the creation of the donation program created under this section must be paid proportionally or by another agreement by a participating Washington state organ procurement organization established for organ and tissue donation awareness purposes by the Washington state organ procurement organizations. For the purposes of this section, "reasonable costs" and "Washington state organ procurement organization" have the same meaning as in RCW 68.64.010.

(3) The department must collect from a vehicle owner who pays a vehicle license fee under RCW 46.17.350(1) (a), (d) through (l), (n), (o), or (q) or who registers a vehicle under RCW 46.16A.455 with a declared gross weight of twelve thousand pounds or less a voluntary donation of five dollars. The donation may not be collected from any vehicle owner actively opting not to participate in the donation program. The department must ensure that the opt-out donation under this section is clear, visible, and prominently displayed in both paper and online vehicle registration renewals. Notification of intent to not participate in the donation program must be provided annually at the time of vehicle registration renewal. The donation must be deposited in the state parks renewal and stewardship account established in RCW 79A.05.215 to be used for the operation and maintenance of state parks.

(4) A vehicle owner who registers a vehicle under this chapter may purchase a discover pass for the price amount established in RCW 79A.80.020. Purchase of a discover pass is voluntary by the vehicle owner. The discover pass fee must be deposited in the recreation access pass account created in RCW 79A.80.090. The department, county auditor, or other agent or subagent appointed by the director is not responsible for delivering a purchased discover pass to a motor vehicle owner. The agencies, as defined in RCW 79A.80.010, must deliver the purchased discover pass to a motor vehicle owner. [2012 c 261 s 9; 2011 c 320 s 12; 2010 c 161 s 420; 2009 c 512 s 1; 2007 c 340 s 1. Formerly RCW 46.16.076.]

Effective date—2012 c 261: See note following RCW 79A.80.010.

Effective date—2011 c 320 s 12: "Section 12 of this act takes effect October 1, 2011." [2011 c 320 s 26.]

Findings—Intent—2011 c 320: See RCW 79A.80.005.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.100 Registration—Federal heavy vehicle use tax. The department may refuse registration of a vehicle if the applicant has failed to furnish proof, acceptable to the department, that the federal heavy vehicle use tax imposed by section 4481 of the internal revenue code of 1954 has been paid.

The department may adopt rules as deemed necessary to administer this section. [1985 c 79 s 1. Formerly RCW 46.16.073.]

RCW 46.16A.110 Registration renewal—Exemptions. (1) A registered owner or the registered owner's authorized representative must apply for a renewal vehicle registration to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director on a form approved by the director. The application for a renewal vehicle registration must be accompanied by a draft, money order, certified bank check, or cash for all fees and taxes required by law for the application for a renewal vehicle registration.

(2)(a) When a vehicle changes ownership, the person taking ownership or his or her authorized representative must apply for a renewal vehicle registration as provided in subsection (1) of this section and, except as provided in (b) of this subsection, pay all the taxes and fees that are due at the time of registration renewal. For the purposes of this section, when a vehicle is sold to a vehicle dealer for resale, the application for a renewal registration need not be made until the vehicle is sold by the vehicle dealer.

(b) The person taking ownership or his or her authorized representative must be given credit for the portion of a motor vehicle excise tax, including the motor vehicle excise tax collected under RCW 81.104.160, that reflects the remaining period for which the tax was initially paid by the previous owner.

(3) An application and the fees and taxes for a renewal vehicle registration must be handled in the same manner as an original vehicle registration application. The registration does not need to show the name of the lienholder when the application for renewal vehicle registration becomes the renewal registration upon validation.

(4) A person expecting to be out of state during the normal renewal period of a vehicle registration may renew a vehicle registration and have license plates or tabs preissued by applying for a renewal as described in subsection (1) of this section. A vehicle registration may be renewed for the subsequent registration year up to eighteen months before the current expiration date and must be displayed from the date of issue or from the day of the expiration of the current registration year, whichever date is later.

(5) An application for a renewal vehicle registration is not required for those vehicles owned, rented, or leased by:

(a) The state of Washington, or by any county, city, town, school district, or other political subdivision of the state of Washington; or

(b) A governing body of an Indian tribe located within this state and recognized as a governmental entity by the United States department of the interior. [2014 c 80 s 3. Prior: 2010 c 161 s 428;

2010 c 8 s 9012; 2001 c 206 s 1; 1997 c 241 s 8; 1994 c 262 s 9; 1977 c 8 s 1; prior: 1975 1st ex.s. c 169 s 6; 1975 1st ex.s. c 118 s 8; 1969 ex.s. c 75 s 1; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.210; prior: 1957 c 273 s 5; 1955 c 89 s 2; 1953 c 252 s 3; 1947 c 164 s 11; 1937 c 188 s 34; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6312-34. Formerly RCW 46.16.210.]

Application—2014 c 80: See note following RCW 46.16A.200.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session —2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective date—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 118: See notes following RCW 46.16A.020.

RCW 46.16A.115 Open safety recalls—Notice—Liability. (1)(a) The department shall, before issuing a motor vehicle registration or mailing a motor vehicle registration renewal notice, check information made available by the national highway traffic safety administration to determine whether the motor vehicle is subject to an open safety recall. For a vehicle that is subject to one or more open safety recalls, the department shall provide the owner of the motor vehicle written notice of all open safety recalls applicable to the motor vehicle. The recall notice must be provided at the time the vehicle is registered as well as be included in any registration renewal notices sent to consumers by the department. The renewal notice must include a statement that the vehicle has one or more open safety recalls that may be repaired by a motor vehicle dealer approved by the manufacturer of the motor vehicle at no cost to the owner of the motor vehicle, except as provided in 49 U.S.C. Sec. 30120.

(b) The department shall include as part of any reminder notices sent to consumers before the expiration of their registration a notice that their vehicle has one or more open safety recalls and that each open safety recall may be repaired by a motor vehicle dealer approved by the manufacturer of the motor vehicle at no cost to the owner of the motor vehicle, except as provided in 49 U.S.C. Sec. 30120.

(2) Nothing in this section alters the liability of any motor vehicle manufacturer or motor vehicle dealer approved by the manufacturer to repair an open safety recall.

(3) The director and director's designees including, pursuant to RCW 46.01.140, county auditors, agents, and subagents, for the purposes of discharging their duties pursuant to chapter 440, Laws of 2023 are not liable for any act or omission related to the provision of an open safety recall notice and are immune from any related civil suit or action, consistent with RCW 46.01.310.

(4) For the purposes of this section, "open safety recall" means a safety-related recall, for which notification by a manufacturer is required to be provided under 49 U.S.C. Secs. 30118 and 30119, that necessitates repairs or modifications to a motor vehicle by an authorized motor vehicle dealer. "Open safety recall" does not include: Recalls related to defects or failures to comply with requirements relating to labeling or notification in a motor vehicle's owner's manual; or recalls where the remedy is for the manufacturer to repurchase the motor vehicle or otherwise provide financial compensation to the owner of the motor vehicle. [2023 c 440 s 3.]

Effective date—Written notice to owner of motor vehicle from official motor vehicle inspection facility or licensed private inspection facility—Liability of motor vehicle manufacturer or approved motor vehicle dealer may not be altered—2023 c 440: See notes following RCW 46.32.140.

RCW 46.16A.120 Forwarding and payment of standing, stopping, and parking violations and other infractions required before registration renewal. (1) Each court and government agency located in this state having jurisdiction over standing, stopping, and parking violations, the use of a photo toll system under RCW 46.63.160, the use of automated traffic safety cameras under RCW 46.63.220 through 46.63.260, the use of automated school bus safety cameras under RCW 46.63.180, and the use of speed safety camera systems under RCW 46.63.200 may forward to the department any outstanding:

(a) Standing, stopping, and parking violations;

(b) Civil penalties for toll nonpayment detected through the use of photo toll systems issued under RCW 46.63.160;

(c) Automated traffic safety camera infractions issued under RCW 46.63.030(1)(d);

(d) Automated school bus safety camera infractions issued under RCW 46.63.030(1)(e); and

(e) Speed safety camera system infractions issued under RCW 46.63.030(1)(f).

(2) Violations, civil penalties, and infractions described in subsection (1) of this section must be reported to the department in the manner described in RCW 46.20.270(3).

(3) The department shall:

(a) Record the violations, civil penalties, and infractions on the matching vehicle records; and

(b) Send notice approximately 120 days in advance of the current vehicle registration expiration date to the registered owner listing the dates and jurisdictions in which the violations, civil penalties, and infractions occurred, the amounts of unpaid fines and penalties, and the surcharge to be collected. Only those violations, civil penalties, and infractions received by the department 120 days or more before the current vehicle registration expiration date will be included in the notice. Violations, civil penalties, and infractions received by the department later than 120 days before the current vehicle registration expiration date that are not satisfied will be delayed until the next vehicle registration expiration date.

(4) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director shall not renew a vehicle registration if there are any outstanding standing, stopping, and parking violations, and other civil penalties issued under RCW 46.63.160 for the vehicle unless:

(a) The outstanding standing, stopping, or parking violations and civil penalties were received by the department within 120 days before the current vehicle registration expiration;

(b) There is a change in registered ownership; or

(c) The registered owner presents proof of payment of each violation, civil penalty, and infraction provided in this section and the registered owner pays the surcharge required under RCW 46.17.030.

(5) The department shall:

(a) Forward a change in registered ownership information to the court or government agency who reported the outstanding violations, civil penalties, or infractions; and

(b) Remove the outstanding violations, civil penalties, and infractions from the vehicle record. [2024 c 308 s 1; 2024 c 307 s 7; 2012 c 83 s 5. Prior: 2011 c 375 s 9; 2011 c 375 s 8; 2010 c 249 s 10; 2010 c 161 s 430; 2004 c 231 s 4; 1990 2nd ex.s. c 1 s 401; 1984 c 224 s 1. Formerly RCW 46.16.216.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2024 c 307 s 7 and by 2024 c 308 s 1, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Contingent effective date—2011 c 375 ss 5, 7, and 9: See note following RCW 46.63.030.

Intent—2011 c 375: See note following RCW 46.63.180.

Contingent effective date—2010 c 249: See note following RCW 47.56.795.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Severability—1990 2nd ex.s. c 1: See note following RCW 82.14.300.

Severability—1984 c 224: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1984 c 224 s 5.]

Effective date—1984 c 224: "This act shall take effect on July 1, 1984." [1984 c 224 s 6.]

RCW 46.16A.130 Notice of liability insurance requirement. The department shall notify motor vehicle owners of the liability insurance requirements described in RCW 46.30.020 through 46.30.040 at the time of issuance of an original motor vehicle registration and when the department sends a motor vehicle registration renewal notice. [2010 c 161 s 429; 1989 c 353 s 10. Formerly RCW 46.16.212.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective date—1989 c 353: See RCW 46.30.901.

RCW 46.16A.140 "Resident" defined—Natural person residency requirements—Vehicle registration required. (1) For the purposes of vehicle registration, a resident is a person who manifests an intent to live or be located in this state on more than a temporary or

transient basis. Evidence of residency includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Becoming a registered voter in this state;

(b) Receiving benefits under one of the Washington public assistance programs; or

(c) Declaring residency for the purpose of obtaining a state license or tuition fees at resident rates.

(2) A natural person may be a resident of this state even though that person has or claims residency or domicile in another state or intends to leave this state at some future time. A natural person is presumed a resident if the natural person meets at least two of the following conditions:

(a) Maintains a residence in this state for personal use;

(b) Has a Washington state driver's license or a Washington state resident hunting or fishing license;

(c) Uses a Washington state address for federal income tax or state tax purposes;

(d) Has previously maintained a residence in this state for personal use and has not established a permanent residence outside the state of Washington, such as a person who retires and lives in a motor home or vessel that is not permanently attached to any property;

(e) Claims this state as his or her residence for obtaining eligibility to hold a public office or for judicial actions;

(f) Is a custodial parent with a child attending public schools in this state.

(3) "Washington public assistance programs," as referred to in subsection (1)(b) of this section, includes only public assistance programs for which more than fifty percent of the combined costs of benefits and administration are paid from state funds. "Washington public assistance programs" does not include: The food stamp program under the federal food stamp act of 1964; programs under the child nutrition act of 1966, 42 U.S.C. Secs. 1771 through 1788; and temporary assistance for needy families.

(4) A resident of the state shall apply for a certificate of title under chapter 46.12 RCW and register under this chapter a vehicle to be operated on the highways of the state. New Washington residents are allowed thirty days from the date they become residents as defined in this section to obtain Washington registration for their vehicles. This thirty-day period may not be combined with any other period of reciprocity provided for in this chapter or chapter 46.85 RCW. [2010 c 161 s 410; 1997 c 59 s 7; 1987 c 142 s 1; 1986 c 186 s 2; 1985 c 353 s 1. Formerly RCW 46.16.028.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective date—1985 c 353: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately, except for section 1 of this act, which shall take effect September 1, 1985." [1985 c 353 s 6.]

RCW 46.16A.150 Purchasing a vehicle with foreign plates. A person may not purchase a vehicle displaying foreign license plates without removing and destroying the license plates unless:

(1) The out-of-state vehicle is sold to a Washington resident by a resident of a jurisdiction where the license plates follow the owner;

(2) The out-of-state license plates may be returned to the jurisdiction of issuance by the owner for refund purposes; or

(3) For other reasons as determined by the department by rule. [2010 c 161 s 411; 1987 c 142 s 2. Formerly RCW 46.16.029.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.160 Nonresident exemption—Reciprocity—Rules. (1) The provisions of this chapter relating to the registration of vehicles and display of license plates and registration certificates do not apply to vehicles owned by nonresidents of this state if:

(a) The owner has complied with the law requiring the registration of vehicles in the names of the owners in force in the state, foreign country, territory, or federal district of residence; and

(b) The license plate showing the initial or abbreviation of the name of the state, foreign country, territory, or federal district is displayed on the vehicle substantially as required in this state.

(2) This section applies only if the laws of the state, foreign country, territory, or federal district of the nonresident's residence allow similar exemptions and privileges to vehicles registered under the laws of the foreign state, country, territory, or federal district.

(3) Foreign businesses owning, maintaining, or operating places of business in this state and using vehicles in connection with those places of business shall comply with this chapter. Under provisions of the international registration plan, the nonmotor vehicles of member and nonmember jurisdictions that are properly based and registered in such jurisdictions have reciprocity in this state as provided in RCW 46.87.070.

(4) The director may adopt and enforce rules for the registration of nonresident vehicles on a reciprocal basis and with respect to any character or class of operation. [2010 c 161 s 412; 1991 c 163 s 2; 1990 c 42 s 110; 1967 c 32 s 15; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.030. Prior: 1937 c 188 s 23; RRS s 6312-23; 1931 c 120 s 1; 1929 c 99 s 4; 1921 c 96 s 11; 1919 c 59 s 6; 1917 c 155 s 7; 1915 c 142 s 11; RRS s 6322. Formerly RCW 46.16.030.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Purpose—Effective dates—Application—Implementation—1990 c 42: See notes following RCW 46.68.090.

RCW 46.16A.170 Exemptions from vehicle license fees—State and publicly owned vehicles. (1) The following vehicles are exempt from the payment of vehicle license fees:

(a) Any vehicle owned, rented, or leased by the state of Washington, or by any county, city, town, school district, or other political subdivision of the state of Washington and used exclusively by them;

(b) Vehicles owned or leased with an option to purchase by the United States government, or by the government of foreign countries, or by international bodies to which the United States government is a signatory by treaty;

(c) Vehicles owned or leased by the governing body of an Indian tribe located within this state and recognized as a governmental entity by the United States department of the interior, and used exclusively in its service;

(d) Any bus or vehicle owned and operated by a private school or schools meeting the requirements of RCW 28A.195.010 and used by that school or schools primarily to transport children to and from school or to transport children in connection with school activities. A registration issued by the department for these buses or vehicles is exempt from the motor vehicle excise tax provided in chapter 82.44 RCW;

(e) Vehicles owned and used exclusively by the United States government and are clearly identified by displaying registration numbers or license plates assigned by the United States government if the vehicle is registered and displays license plates assigned to it by the United States government; and

(f) Except for payment of the license plate fee required under RCW 46.17.240, vehicles owned and used exclusively by the United States government and are clearly identified by displaying registration numbers of license plates assigned by the state of Washington if the vehicle is registered and displays license plates assigned to it by the state of Washington.

(2) The department shall assign a license plate or plates to each vehicle or may assign a block of license plates to an agency or political subdivision for further assignment by the agency or political subdivision to individual vehicles registered to it. The agency, political subdivision, or Indian tribe, except a foreign government or international body, shall pay the fee required in RCW 46.17.240 for the license plate or plates for each vehicle.

(3) An Indian tribe located within this state and recognized as a governmental entity by the United States department of the interior is not entitled to register any tribal government service vehicle under this section if that tribe itself registers any tribal government service vehicles under tribal law.

(4) A vehicle registration or license plates may not be issued to any vehicle under this section for the transportation of school children unless the vehicle has been first inspected by the director or the director's authorized representative. [2010 c 161 s 407; 1986 c 30 s 1; 1975 1st ex.s. c 169 s 5; 1973 1st ex.s. c 132 s 22; 1967 c 32 s 14; 1965 ex.s. c 106 s 1; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.020. Prior: 1939 c 182 s 4; 1937 c 188 s 21; RRS s 6312-21; 1925 ex.s. c 47 s 1; 1921 c 96 s 17; 1919 c 46 s 2; 1917 c 155 s 12; 1915 c 142 s 17; RRS s 6329. Formerly RCW 46.16.020.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Marking of publicly owned vehicles: RCW 46.08.065 through 46.08.068.

Special license plates issued without fee
Congressional Medal of Honor recipients: RCW 46.18.230.
surviving spouse or surviving domestic partner of deceased prisoner of war: RCW 73.04.115.
veterans with disabilities, prisoners of war: RCW 46.18.235.

RCW 46.16A.175 Exemptions from vehicle license fees—Vehicles owned by Indian tribes—Conditions. (1) The provisions of this chapter relating to registering vehicles by this state, including the display of license plates and registration certificates, do not apply to vehicles owned or leased by the governing body of an Indian tribe located within this state and recognized as a governmental entity by the United States department of the interior if:

(a) The vehicle is used exclusively in tribal government service;

(b) The vehicle has been registered under a law adopted by the tribal government;

(c) License plates issued by the tribe showing the initial or abbreviation of the name of the tribe are displayed on the vehicle as required in this state;

(d) The tribe has not elected to receive Washington state license plates for tribal government service vehicles as authorized in RCW 46.16A.170; and

(e) If required by the department, the tribe provides the department with vehicle description and ownership information similar to that required for vehicles registered in this state, which may include the model year, make, model series, body type, type of power, vehicle identification number, and the license plate number assigned to each government service vehicle registered by that tribe.

(2) This section applies only if the laws of the tribe:

(a) Allow similar exemptions and privileges to all vehicles registered under the laws of this state on all tribal roads within the tribe's reservation; and

(b) Do not require persons operating vehicles registered by this state to pay a registration fee or to carry or display license plates or a registration certificate issued by the tribe. [2010 c 161 s 408; 1986 c 30 s 2. Formerly RCW 46.16.022.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.180 Registration certificates—Formats—Requirements—Penalty—Exception—Manual removal of registrant's address. (1) A registration certificate must be:

(a) Signed by the registered owner, or if a firm or corporation, the signature of one of its officers or other authorized agent, to be valid;

(b) Carried in the vehicle for which it is issued; and

(c) Provided to law enforcement and the department by the operator of the vehicle upon demand.

(d) The registration certificate required by this section may be provided in either paper or electronic format. Acceptable electronic formats include the display of electronic images on a cellular phone or any other type of portable electronic device.

(2) It is unlawful for any person to operate or be in possession of a vehicle without carrying a registration certificate for the vehicle. Any person in charge of a vehicle shall, upon demand of any of the local authorities or of any police officer or of any representative of the department, permit an inspection of the vehicle registration certificate. This section does not apply to a vehicle for which registration is not required to be renewed annually and is a publicly owned vehicle marked as required under RCW 46.08.065.

(3) Beginning January 1, 2023, paper issued registrations [registration] certificates for vehicles or trailers must be printed to allow for the manual removal of a registrant's address, by the named registered owner, without compromising any required information on the certificate. [2022 c 36 s 2; 2013 c 157 s 3; 2010 c 161 s 432; 2010 c 8 s 9014; 1986 c 18 s 16; 1979 ex.s. c 113 s 3; 1969 ex.s. c 170 s 11; 1967 c 32 s 19; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.260. Prior: 1955 c 384 s 18; 1937 c 188 s 8; RRS s 6312-8. Formerly RCW 46.16.260.]

Finding—2022 c 36: "(1) The legislature finds that printing addresses on vehicle registrations provides an opportunity for thieves that break into vehicles to use the information for nefarious purposes that can be avoided if the address is not printed on the vehicle registration certificate.

(2) Furthermore, law enforcement agencies have access to databases that include the vehicle registrant's address so such information does not need to be printed on paper vehicle registration certificates.

(3) In order to reduce criminal opportunities, the legislature directs the department of licensing to print addresses on vehicle, trailer, and vessel registration certificates in a location that facilitates the removal of the address." [2022 c 36 s 1.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.185 Requirement for commercial motor vehicle registration certificate. The registration certificate for a commercial vehicle must include a statement that the owner or person operating a commercial vehicle must be in compliance with the requirements of the United States department of transportation federal motor carrier safety regulations contained in 49 C.F.R. Part 382. [2010 c 161 s 434.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.190 Replacement registration certificates. A registered owner or the registered owner's authorized representative shall promptly apply for a duplicate registration certificate if the person is applying for a replacement license tab or windshield emblem or a registration certificate is lost, stolen, mutilated, or destroyed, or becomes illegible. The application for a duplicate registration certificate must include information required by the department and be accompanied by the fee required in RCW 46.17.320. The duplicate registration certificate must contain the word, "duplicate."

A person recovering a registration certificate for which a duplicate has been issued shall promptly return the recovered registration certificate to the department. [2017 c 147 s 5; 2010 c 161 s 433; 1997 c 241 s 6. Formerly RCW 46.16.265.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session —2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.200 License plates. ***(Effective until January 1, 2027.)*** (1) **Design.** All license plates may be obtained by the director from the metal working plant of a state correctional facility or from any source in accordance with existing state of Washington purchasing procedures. License plates:

(a) May vary in background, color, and design;

(b) Must be legible and clearly identifiable as a Washington state license plate;

(c) Must designate the name of the state of Washington without abbreviation;

(d) Must be treated with fully reflectorized materials designed to increase visibility and legibility at night;

(e) Must be of a size and color and show the registration period as determined by the director; and

(f) Before July 1, 2010, may display a symbol or artwork approved by the former special license plate review board and the legislature. Beginning July 1, 2010, special license plate series approved by the department and enacted into law by the legislature may display a symbol or artwork approved by the department.

(2) **Exceptions to reflectorized materials.** License plates issued before January 1, 1968, are not required to be treated with reflectorized materials.

(3) **Dealer license plates.** License plates issued to a dealer must contain an indication that the license plates have been issued to a vehicle dealer.

(4)(a) **Furnished.** The director shall furnish to all persons making satisfactory application for a vehicle registration:

(i) Two identical license plates each containing the license plate number; or

(ii) One license plate if the vehicle is a trailer, semitrailer, camper, moped, collector vehicle, horseless carriage, or motorcycle.

(b) The director may adopt types of license plates to be used as long as the license plates are legible.

(5)(a) **Display.** License plates must be:

(i) Attached conspicuously at the front and rear of each vehicle if two license plates have been issued;

(ii) Attached to the rear of the vehicle if one license plate has been issued;

(iii) Except as provided in subsection (7)(c)(ii) of this section, kept clean and uncovered and be able to be plainly seen and read at all times unless an exception in (b) of this subsection applies; and

(iv) Attached in a horizontal position at a distance of not more than four feet from the ground.

(b)(i) The Washington state patrol may grant exceptions to this subsection if the body construction of the vehicle makes compliance with this section impossible.

(ii) If the applicable requirements of (b)(iii) of this subsection are met, the display of a single license plate properly attached to a vehicle that has two license plates properly attached in accordance with (a)(i) of this subsection may be temporarily obstructed by one or more of the following devices or by the cargo the device is carrying:

(A) A trailer hitch;

(B) A wheelchair lift or wheelchair carrier;

(C) A trailer being towed by the vehicle, provided the trailer meets any applicable trailer license plate requirements under this chapter; or

(D) A bicycle rack, ski rack, or luggage rack.

(iii) The obstruction of a single license plate under (b)(ii) or (b)(iv) of this subsection is only authorized if the following requirements are met:

(A) The device is installed according to manufacturer specifications or generally accepted installation practices; and

(B) The device or cargo the device is carrying does not prevent the license plate from being read from one or more accessible viewing angles when the vehicle is parked, except if the device is a trailer that meets the trailer license plate requirements under this chapter.

(iv) If the applicable requirements of (b)(iii) of this subsection are met, the display of a single license plate attached to a trailer in accordance with (a)(ii) of this subsection and meeting any applicable trailer license plate requirements under this chapter may be obstructed by a device for transporting a forklift used for product delivery purposes. For purposes of license plate visibility, the single trailer license plate obstructed by a device for carrying a forklift may be relocated on the trailer or the towing vehicle to a position that is more than four feet from the ground.

(6) **Change of license classification.** A person who has altered a vehicle that makes the current license plate or plates invalid for the vehicle's use shall:

(a) Surrender the current license plate or plates to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director;

(b) Apply for a new license plate or plates; and

(c) Pay a change of classification fee required under RCW 46.17.310.

(7) **Unlawful acts.** It is unlawful to:

(a) Display a license plate or plates on the front or rear of any vehicle that were not issued by the director for the vehicle;

(b) Display a license plate or plates on any vehicle that have been changed, altered, or disfigured, or have become illegible;

(c)(i) Except as provided in (c)(ii) of this subsection, use license plate holders, frames, covers, or other materials that

conceal, obstruct, distort, change, alter, or make a license plate or plates illegible;

(ii) License plate frames may be used on license plates only if the frames do not obscure license tabs or identifying letters or numbers on the plates and the license plates can be plainly seen and read at all times;

(d) Operate a vehicle unless a valid license plate or plates are attached as required under this section;

(e) Transfer a license plate or plates issued under this chapter between two or more vehicles without first making application to transfer the license plates. A violation of this subsection (7)(e) is a traffic infraction subject to a fine not to exceed $500. Any law enforcement agency that determines that a license plate or plates have been transferred between two or more vehicles shall confiscate the license plate or plates and return them to the department for nullification along with full details of the reasons for confiscation. Each vehicle identified in the transfer will be issued a new license plate or plates upon application by the owner or owners and the payment of full fees and taxes; or

(f) Fail, neglect, or refuse to endorse the registration certificate, except as authorized under this section.

(8) **Transfer.** (a) Standard issue license plates must be replaced when ownership of the vehicle changes, pursuant to subsection (9)(a)(i) of this section, but the registered owner may retain the license plates and transfer them to a replacement vehicle of the same use. In addition to all other taxes and fees due upon change in ownership, a registered owner wishing to keep standard issue license plates shall pay the license plate transfer fee required under RCW 46.17.200(1)(c) when applying for license plate transfer.

(b) Special license plates and personalized license plates may be treated in the same manner as described in (a) of this subsection unless otherwise limited by law.

(c) License plates issued to the state or any county, city, town, school district, or other political subdivision entitled to exemption as provided by law may be treated in the same manner as described in (a) of this subsection.

(d) License plate replacement is not required when a change in vehicle ownership is the result of one or more of the following circumstances:

(i) When adding a lienholder to the certificate of title or removing a lienholder from the certificate of title;

(ii) When a vehicle is transferred from one spouse or registered domestic partner to another;

(iii) When removing a deceased spouse or registered domestic partner from the certificate of title;

(iv) When a vehicle is transferred by gift or inheritance to one or more members of the registered owner's immediate family;

(v) When a vehicle is transferred into or out of a trust in which the registered owner or one or more immediate family members of the registered owner is the beneficiary;

(vi) When a leaseholder buys out the leased vehicle; or

(vii) When a person changes his or her name.

(9) **Replacement.** (a) Except as provided in subsection (8)(a) of this section, an owner or the owner's authorized representative must apply for a replacement license plate or plates: (i) When taking ownership of the vehicle; (ii) if the current license plate or plates assigned to the vehicle have been lost, defaced, or destroyed; or

(iii) if one or both plates have become so illegible or are in such a condition as to be difficult to distinguish. An owner or the owner's authorized representative may apply for a replacement license plate or plates at any time the owner chooses. The department shall offer to owners the option of retaining the current license plate number when obtaining replacement license plates for the fee required in RCW 46.17.200(1)(b).

(b) The application for a replacement license plate or plates must:

(i) Be on a form furnished or approved by the director; and

(ii) Be accompanied by the fee required under RCW 46.17.200(1)(a).

(c) When a vehicle is sold to a vehicle dealer for resale, the application for a replacement plate or plates need not be made until the vehicle is sold by the vehicle dealer.

(d) The department shall not require the payment of any fee to replace a license plate or plates for vehicles owned, rented, or leased by foreign countries or international bodies to which the United States government is a signatory by treaty.

(10) **Replacement—Exceptions.** The following license plates are not required to be replaced as required in subsection (9) of this section:

(a) Horseless carriage license plates issued under RCW 46.18.255 before January 1, 1987;

(b) Medal of Honor license plates issued under RCW 46.18.230;

(c) License plates for commercial motor vehicles with a gross weight greater than 26,000 pounds.

(11) **Rules.** The department may adopt rules to implement this section.

(12) **Tabs or emblems.** The director may issue tabs or emblems to be attached to license plates or elsewhere on the vehicle to signify initial registration and renewals. Renewals become effective when tabs or emblems have been issued and properly displayed. [2024 c 84 s 1; 2022 c 130 s 1. Prior: 2014 c 181 s 2; 2014 c 80 s 1; 2011 c 171 s 46; 2010 c 161 s 422.]

Application—2014 c 80: "This act applies to vehicle registrations that are due or become due on or after January 1, 2015." [2014 c 80 s 7.]

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.200 License plates. *(Effective January 1, 2027.)* (1) **Design.** All license plates may be obtained by the director from the metal working plant of a state correctional facility or from any source in accordance with existing state of Washington purchasing procedures. License plates:

(a) May vary in background, color, and design;

(b) Must be legible and clearly identifiable as a Washington state license plate;

(c) Must designate the name of the state of Washington without abbreviation;

(d) Must be treated with fully reflectorized materials designed to increase visibility and legibility at night;

(e) Must be of a size and color and show the registration period as determined by the director; and

(f) Before July 1, 2010, may display a symbol or artwork approved by the former special license plate review board and the legislature. Beginning July 1, 2010, special license plate series approved by the department and enacted into law by the legislature may display a symbol or artwork approved by the department.

(2) **Exceptions to reflectorized materials.** License plates issued before January 1, 1968, are not required to be treated with reflectorized materials.

(3) **Dealer license plates.** License plates issued to a dealer must contain an indication that the license plates have been issued to a vehicle dealer.

(4)(a) **Furnished.** The director shall furnish to all persons making satisfactory application for a vehicle registration:

(i) Two identical license plates each containing the license plate number; or

(ii) One license plate if the vehicle is a trailer, semitrailer, camper, moped, collector vehicle, horseless carriage, or motorcycle.

(b) The director may adopt types of license plates to be used as long as the license plates are legible.

(5)(a) **Display.** License plates must be:

(i) Attached conspicuously at the front and rear of each vehicle if two license plates have been issued;

(ii) Attached to the rear of the vehicle if one license plate has been issued;

(iii) Except as provided in subsection (7)(c)(ii) of this section, kept clean and uncovered and be able to be plainly seen and read at all times unless an exception in (b) of this subsection applies; and

(iv) Attached in a horizontal position at a distance of not more than four feet from the ground.

(b)(i) The Washington state patrol may grant exceptions to this subsection if the body construction of the vehicle makes compliance with this section impossible.

(ii) If the applicable requirements of (b)(iii) of this subsection are met, the display of a single license plate properly attached to a vehicle that has two license plates properly attached in accordance with (a)(i) of this subsection may be temporarily obstructed by one or more of the following devices or by the cargo the device is carrying:

(A) A trailer hitch;

(B) A wheelchair lift or wheelchair carrier;

(C) A trailer being towed by the vehicle, provided the trailer meets any applicable trailer license plate requirements under this chapter; or

(D) A bicycle rack, ski rack, or luggage rack.

(iii) The obstruction of a single license plate under (b)(ii) or (b)(iv) of this subsection is only authorized if the following requirements are met:

(A) The device is installed according to manufacturer specifications or generally accepted installation practices; and

(B) The device or cargo the device is carrying does not prevent the license plate from being read from one or more accessible viewing angles when the vehicle is parked, except if the device is a trailer that meets the trailer license plate requirements under this chapter.

(iv) If the applicable requirements of (b)(iii) of this subsection are met, the display of a single license plate attached to a trailer in accordance with (a)(ii) of this subsection and meeting any applicable trailer license plate requirements under this chapter may be obstructed by a device for transporting a forklift used for product delivery purposes. For purposes of license plate visibility, the single trailer license plate obstructed by a device for carrying a forklift may be relocated on the trailer or the towing vehicle to a position that is more than four feet from the ground.

(6) **Change of license classification.** A person who has altered a vehicle that makes the current license plate or plates invalid for the vehicle's use shall:

(a) Surrender the current license plate or plates to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director;

(b) Apply for a new license plate or plates; and

(c) Pay a change of classification fee required under RCW 46.17.310.

(7) **Unlawful acts.** It is unlawful to:

(a) Display a license plate or plates on the front or rear of any vehicle that were not issued by the director for the vehicle;

(b) Display a license plate or plates on any vehicle that have been changed, altered, or disfigured, or have become illegible;

(c)(i) Except as provided in (c)(ii) of this subsection, use license plate holders, frames, covers, or other materials that conceal, obstruct, distort, change, alter, or make a license plate or plates illegible;

(ii) License plate frames may be used on license plates only if the frames do not obscure license tabs or identifying letters or numbers on the plates and the license plates can be plainly seen and read at all times;

(d) Operate a vehicle unless a valid license plate or plates are attached as required under this section;

(e) Transfer a license plate or plates issued under this chapter between two or more vehicles without first making application to transfer the license plates. A violation of this subsection (7)(e) is a traffic infraction subject to a fine not to exceed $500. Any law enforcement agency that determines that a license plate or plates have been transferred between two or more vehicles shall confiscate the license plate or plates and return them to the department for nullification along with full details of the reasons for confiscation. Each vehicle identified in the transfer will be issued a new license plate or plates upon application by the owner or owners and the payment of full fees and taxes; or

(f) Fail, neglect, or refuse to endorse the registration certificate, except as authorized under this section.

(8) **Transfer.** (a) Standard issue license plates must be replaced when ownership of the vehicle changes, pursuant to subsection (9)(a)(i) of this section, but the registered owner may retain the license plates and transfer them to a replacement vehicle of the same use. In addition to all other taxes and fees due upon change in ownership, a registered owner wishing to keep standard issue license

plates shall pay the license plate transfer fee required under RCW 46.17.200(1)(c) when applying for license plate transfer.

(b) Special license plates and personalized license plates may be treated in the same manner as described in (a) of this subsection unless otherwise limited by law.

(c) License plates issued to the state or any county, city, town, school district, or other political subdivision entitled to exemption as provided by law may be treated in the same manner as described in (a) of this subsection.

(d) License plate replacement is not required when a change in vehicle ownership is the result of one or more of the following circumstances:

(i) When adding a lienholder to the certificate of title or removing a lienholder from the certificate of title;

(ii) When a vehicle is transferred from one spouse or registered domestic partner to another;

(iii) When removing a deceased spouse or registered domestic partner from the certificate of title;

(iv) When a vehicle is transferred by gift or inheritance to one or more members of the registered owner's immediate family;

(v) When a vehicle is transferred into or out of a trust in which the registered owner or one or more immediate family members of the registered owner is the beneficiary;

(vi) When a leaseholder buys out the leased vehicle; or

(vii) When a person changes his or her name.

(9) **Replacement.** (a) Except as provided in subsection (8)(a) of this section, an owner or the owner's authorized representative must apply for a replacement license plate or plates: (i) When taking ownership of the vehicle; (ii) if the current license plate or plates assigned to the vehicle have been lost, defaced, or destroyed; or (iii) if one or both plates have become so illegible or are in such a condition as to be difficult to distinguish. An owner or the owner's authorized representative may apply for a replacement license plate or plates at any time the owner chooses. The department shall offer to owners the option of retaining the current license plate number when obtaining replacement license plates for the fee required in RCW 46.17.200(1)(b).

(b) The application for a replacement license plate or plates must:

(i) Be on a form furnished or approved by the director; and

(ii) Be accompanied by the fee required under RCW 46.17.200(1)(a), unless the license plate for which a replacement is sought is defective and qualifies for a replacement plate to be issued free of charge or at a reduced fee pursuant to RCW 46.17.260.

(c) When a vehicle is sold to a vehicle dealer for resale, the application for a replacement plate or plates need not be made until the vehicle is sold by the vehicle dealer.

(d) The department shall not require the payment of any fee to replace a license plate or plates for vehicles owned, rented, or leased by foreign countries or international bodies to which the United States government is a signatory by treaty.

(10) **Replacement—Exceptions.** The following license plates are not required to be replaced as required in subsection (9) of this section:

(a) Horseless carriage license plates issued under RCW 46.18.255 before January 1, 1987;

(b) Medal of Honor license plates issued under RCW 46.18.230;

(c) License plates for commercial motor vehicles with a gross weight greater than 26,000 pounds.

(11) **Rules.** The department may adopt rules to implement this section.

(12) **Tabs or emblems.** The director may issue tabs or emblems to be attached to license plates or elsewhere on the vehicle to signify initial registration and renewals. Renewals become effective when tabs or emblems have been issued and properly displayed. [2026 c 172 s 3; 2024 c 84 s 1; 2022 c 130 s 1. Prior: 2014 c 181 s 2; 2014 c 80 s 1; 2011 c 171 s 46; 2010 c 161 s 422.]

Intent—Effective date—2026 c 172: See notes following RCW 46.17.260.

Application—2014 c 80: "This act applies to vehicle registrations that are due or become due on or after January 1, 2015." [2014 c 80 s 7.]

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.210 Emblems—Material, display requirements. License plate emblems and veteran remembrance emblems must use fully reflectorized materials designed to provide visibility at night. Emblems must be designed to be affixed to a license plate by pressure-sensitive adhesive so as not to obscure the plate identification numbers or letters.

Emblems must be issued for display on the front and rear license plates. Single emblems must be issued for vehicles authorized to display one license plate. [2011 c 171 s 47; 1990 c 250 s 8. Formerly RCW 46.16.327.]

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Effective dates—1990 c 250 ss 1-13: See note following RCW 10.05.060.

RCW 46.16A.215 Military emblems—Fees. (1) The director may adopt fees to be charged by the department for emblems issued by the department under RCW 46.18.295.

(2) The fee for each remembrance emblem and military service award emblem issued under RCW 46.18.295 shall be in an amount sufficient to offset the costs of production of remembrance emblems and military service award emblems and the administration of that program by the department plus an amount for use by the department of veterans affairs, not to exceed a total fee of twenty-five dollars per emblem.

(3) The veterans' emblem account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. All receipts by the department from the issuance of remembrance emblems and military service award emblems under RCW 46.18.295 shall be deposited into this fund. Expenditures from the fund may be used only for the costs of production of remembrance emblems and military service award emblems and administration of the program by the department of licensing, with the balance used only by the department of veterans affairs for projects that pay tribute to those living veterans and to those who have died defending freedom in our nation's wars and conflicts and for the upkeep and operations of existing memorials, as well as for planning, acquiring land for, and constructing future memorials. Only the director of licensing, the director of veterans affairs, or their designees may authorize expenditures from the fund. The fund is subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but no appropriation is required for expenditures. [2012 c 69 s 2; 2011 c 171 s 48; 1994 c 194 s 5; 1990 c 250 s 9. Formerly RCW 46.16.332.]

Effective date—2012 c 69: See note following RCW 46.18.295.

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Effective dates—1990 c 250 ss 1-13: See note following RCW 10.05.060.

RCW 46.16A.220 Rules. The director may make and enforce rules to implement this chapter. [1986 c 30 s 4. Formerly RCW 46.16.276.]

RCW 46.16A.230 Tribal license plates and vehicle registration—Compacts. (1) The governor may enter into compacts with federally recognized Indian tribes principally located within this state concerning the licensing and registration of tribal government and tribal member-owned vehicles with tribal license plates issued by the department.

(2) Each compact entered into under this section must contain the following provisions:

(a) The design of a tribal license plate shall be determined by the compacting tribe, except that the design must be readable by toll collection facilities and configured in a manner allowing for electronic distribution through state and national law enforcement databases;

(b) Tribal license plate recipients must pay all applicable taxes, fees, and vehicle tolls, except that the compacting tribe may pay these expenses on behalf of its enrolled members as provided in the compact;

(c) That the eligibility for a tribal license plate is limited to tribal governments and enrolled members of the compacting tribe who reside in the state, and that the compact may address additional requirements;

(d) Information regarding a vehicle that has been issued a tribal license plate, including vehicle description and ownership information, be maintained in the department's recordkeeping systems.

(3) Each compact must also address the following subjects:

(a) The department's administrative costs for issuing tribal license plates and maintaining information regarding vehicles that have been issued tribal license plates;

(b) Information sharing between the department and the compacting tribe;

(c) The process for applying for and receiving tribal license plates; and

(d) Dispute resolution, including the use of mediation or other nonjudicial process.

(4) The governor may delegate the power to negotiate compacts under this section to the department. [2020 c 118 s 1.]

PERMITS AND USES

RCW 46.16A.300 Temporary license plates—Authority—Dealer fees—Secure system. (1) The department may authorize vehicle dealers properly licensed under chapters 46.09, 46.10, and 46.70 RCW to issue temporary license plates as described in RCW 46.16A.305 to operate vehicles under rules adopted by the department.

(2) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director shall collect the fee required under RCW 46.17.400(1)(a) for each temporary license plate application sold to an authorized vehicle dealer.

(3) The payment of vehicle license fees to an authorized dealer is considered payment to the state of Washington.

(4) The department shall provide access to a secure system that allows temporary license plates issued by vehicle dealers properly licensed under chapters 46.09, 46.10, and 46.70 RCW to be generated and printed on demand. By July 1, 2023, all such plates must be generated using the designated system. [2022 c 132 s 4; 2010 c 161 s 415; 2008 c 51 s 1; 2007 c 155 s 1; 1990 c 198 s 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 132 s 23; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.045. Prior: 1959 c 66 s 1. Formerly RCW 46.16.045.]

Effective date—2022 c 132: See note following RCW 46.04.2701.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective date—2007 c 155: "This act takes effect August 1, 2007." [2007 c 155 s 3.]

RCW 46.16A.305 Temporary license plates—Application form and contents—Display and duration—Application fee—Department may adopt rules. (1) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director may grant a temporary license plate to operate a vehicle for which an application for registration has been made. The application for a temporary license plate must be made by the owner or the owner's representative to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director on a form furnished by the department and must contain:

(a) A full description of the vehicle, including its make, model, vehicle identification number, and type of body;

(b) The name and address of the applicant;

(c) The date of application; and

(d) Other information that the department may require.

(2) Temporary license plates must:

(a) Be consecutively numbered;

(b) Be displayed as described for permanent license plates in RCW 46.16A.200(5)(a);

(c) Be composed of material that must be durable and remain unaltered in field conditions for a minimum of four months; and

(d) Remain on the vehicle only until the receipt of permanent license plates.

(3) The application must be accompanied by the fee required under RCW 46.17.400(1)(b).

(4) Pursuant to subsection (2) of this section, the department may adopt rules for the design and display of temporary license plates.

(5) By December 1, 2025, the department must adopt rules implementing contingency extensions of the expiration date for department temporary license plates in cases of shortages of permanent license plates. The rules must prioritize reducing customer return trips for department temporary license plates, and include a communication plan with state and local law enforcement agencies regarding the implementation of the contingency extensions. [2025 c 417 s 1302; 2022 c 132 s 5. Prior: 2010 c 161 s 416; 2010 c 8 s 9011; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.047; prior: 1959 c 66 s 2. Formerly RCW 46.16.047.]

Findings—Intent—2025 c 417: See note following RCW 82.38.030.

Effective date—2022 c 132: See note following RCW 46.04.2701.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.320 Vehicle trip permits—Restrictions and requirements—Fee—Penalty—Rules. (1)(a) A vehicle owner may operate an unregistered vehicle on public highways under the authority of a trip permit issued by this state. For purposes of trip permits, a vehicle is considered unregistered if:

(i) Under reciprocal relations with another jurisdiction, the owner would be required to register the vehicle in this state;

(ii) Not registered when registration is required under this chapter;

(iii) The license tabs have expired; or

(iv) The current gross weight license is insufficient for the load being carried. The licensed gross weight may not exceed eighty thousand pounds for a combination of vehicles or forty thousand pounds for a single unit vehicle with three or more axles.

(b) Trip permits are required to move mobile homes or park model trailers and may only be issued if property taxes are paid in full.

(2) Trip permits may not be:

(a) Issued to vehicles registered under RCW 46.16A.455(5) in lieu of further registration within the same registration year; or

(b) Used for commercial motor vehicles owned by a motor carrier subject to RCW 46.32.080 if the motor carrier's department of transportation number has been placed out of service by the Washington state patrol. A violation of or a failure to comply with this subsection is a gross misdemeanor, subject to a minimum monetary penalty of two thousand five hundred dollars for the first violation and five thousand dollars for each subsequent violation.

(3)(a) Each trip permit authorizes the operation of a single vehicle at the maximum legal weight limit for the vehicle for a period of three consecutive days beginning with the day of first use. No more than three trip permits may be used for any one vehicle in any thirty consecutive day period. No more than two trip permits may be used for any one recreational vehicle, as defined in RCW 43.22.335, in a one-year period. Every trip permit must:

(i) Identify the vehicle for which it is issued;

(ii) Be completed in its entirety;

(iii) Be signed by the operator before operation of the vehicle on the public highways of this state;

(iv) Not be altered or corrected. Altering or correcting data on the trip permit invalidates the trip permit; and

(v) Be displayed on the vehicle for which it is issued as required by the department.

(b) Vehicles operating under the authority of trip permits are subject to all laws, rules, and regulations affecting the operation of similar vehicles in this state.

(4) Prorate operators operating commercial vehicles on trip permits in Washington shall retain the customer copy of each permit for four years.

(5) Trip permits may be obtained from field offices of the department of transportation, department of licensing, county auditors or other agents, and subagents appointed by the department for the fee provided in RCW 46.17.400(1)(h). Exchanges, credits, or refunds may not be given for trip permits after they have been purchased.

(6) Except as provided in subsection (2)(b) of this section, a violation of or a failure to comply with this section is a gross misdemeanor.

(7) The department may adopt rules necessary to administer this section. [2012 c 74 s 15; 2010 c 161 s 425; 2007 c 419 s 6. Prior: 2002 c 352 s 8; 2002 c 168 s 5; 1999 c 270 s 1; 1996 c 184 s 2; 1993 c 102 s 2; 1987 c 244 s 6; 1981 c 318 s 1; 1977 ex.s. c 22 s 5; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 64 s 6; 1969 ex.s. c 170 s 8; 1961 c 306 s 1; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.160; prior: 1957 c 273 s 3; 1955 c 384 s 17; 1949 c 174 s 1; 1947 c 176 s 1; 1937 c 188 s 24; Rem. Supp. 1949 s 6312-24. Formerly RCW 46.16.160.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Findings—Short title—2007 c 419: See notes following RCW 46.16A.010.

Effective dates—2002 c 352: See note following RCW 46.09.410.

Effective date—1996 c 184: See note following RCW 46.16A.030.

Effective date of 1993 c 102 and c 123—1993 sp.s. c 23: See note following RCW 46.16A.455.

Severability—1977 ex.s. c 22: See note following RCW 46.04.302.

Effective dates—Severability—1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 64: See notes following RCW 46.16A.455.

RCW 46.16A.330 Farm vehicle trip permits—Restrictions and requirements—Fee—Rules. (1) The owner of a farm vehicle registered under RCW 46.16A.425 purchasing a monthly registration under RCW 46.16A.455(5) may operate the farm vehicle under the authority of a farm vehicle trip permit if:

(a) There is less than one full month remaining in the first month of the registration; or

(b) A previously issued monthly registration has expired.

(2) A vehicle operating under the authority of a farm vehicle trip permit is subject to all laws and rules affecting the operation of similar vehicles in this state. The licensed gross weight of a vehicle operating under a farm vehicle trip permit may not exceed eighty thousand pounds for a combination of vehicles or forty thousand pounds for a single unit vehicle with three or more axles.

(3) Each farm vehicle trip permit authorizes the operation of a single vehicle at the maximum legal weight limit for the vehicle for thirty days, beginning with the day of first use. No more than four farm vehicle trip permits may be used for any one vehicle in any twelve-month period. Every farm vehicle trip permit must:

(a) Identify the vehicle for which it is issued;

(b) Be completed in its entirety;

(c) Be signed by the operator before operation of the vehicle on the public highways of this state;

(d) Not be altered or corrected. Altering or correcting data on the farm vehicle trip permit invalidates the permit; and

(e) Be displayed on the vehicle to which it is issued as required by the department.

(4) Farm vehicle trip permits may be obtained from the department, county auditors or other agents, or subagents appointed by the director for the fee provided in RCW 46.17.400(1)(c). Exchanges, credits, or refunds may not be given for farm vehicle trip permits after they have been purchased.

(5) The department may adopt rules as it deems necessary to administer this section. [2010 c 161 s 426; 2009 c 452 s 1; 2006 c 337 s 3; 2005 c 314 s 206. Formerly RCW 46.16.162.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective dates—2005 c 314 ss 110 and 201-206: See note following RCW 46.68.035.

Application—2005 c 314 ss 201-206, 301, and 302: See note following RCW 46.68.035.

Part headings not law—2005 c 314: See note following RCW 46.68.035.

RCW 46.16A.340 Temporary permits for nonresident members of armed forces—Fee—Rules. (1) A nonresident member of the armed forces of the United States may apply to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director for a temporary permit for a recently purchased motor vehicle. The permit:

(a) Allows the motor vehicle to be used in Washington state while the owner applies for out-of-state registration;

(b) Is valid for forty-five days; and

(c) Must be carried on the motor vehicle so that it is clearly visible from outside of the motor vehicle.

(2) A person applying for the forty-five day permit provided in subsection (1) of this section is not subject to sales and use taxes or motor vehicle excise taxes during or after the forty-five day period of the permit unless the motor vehicle is:

(a) Still in Washington state after the forty-five day period of the permit; or

(b) Returned to Washington state within one year after the forty-five day permit has expired.

(3) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director shall collect the fee required under RCW 46.17.400(1)(d) when issuing the forty-five day permit described in this section.

(4) The department shall adopt rules to implement this section. Those rules may require proof that the nonresident member of the armed forces of the United States qualifies for the forty-five day permit before the permit may be issued. [2010 c 161 s 435; 1979 c 158 s 141; 1967 c 202 s 4. Formerly RCW 46.16.460.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.350 Temporary letter of authority for movement of unregistered vehicle for special community activity. The department may issue a temporary letter of authority authorizing the movement of an unregistered vehicle or the temporary use of a special plate for the purpose of promoting or participating in an event such as a parade, pageant, fair, convention, or other special community activity. The letter of authority may not be issued to or used by anyone for personal gain, but public identification of the sponsor or owner of the donated vehicle shall not be considered to be personal gain. [2010 c 161 s 417; 1977 c 25 s 2. Formerly RCW 46.16.048.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.360 Thirty, sixty, or ninety-day permits for registered out-of-state commercial vehicles. The owner of a commercial vehicle properly registered in another state may apply to

the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director for an out-of-state commercial vehicle intrastate permit when operating the commercial vehicle in Washington state for periods less than one year. The permit may be issued for a thirty, sixty, or ninety-day period. For each thirty-day period, the cost of each permit is one-twelfth of the fees required under chapter 82.44 RCW if the vehicle is subject to locally imposed motor vehicle excise taxes and (1) under RCW 46.17.355(1) if the vehicle is a motor vehicle or (2) under RCW 46.17.350(1)(c) if the vehicle is a commercial trailer. [2010 c 161 s 427.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session —2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

SPECIFIC VEHICLES

RCW 46.16A.405 Campers, mopeds, and wheelchair conveyances. This chapter applies to the following:

(1) Campers are considered vehicles for the purposes of vehicle registration and license plate display, except for campers held as part of a manufacturer's or dealer's inventory that:

(a) Are unoccupied at all times;

(b) Have been issued a dated demonstration permit that is valid for no more than seventy-two hours. The permit must be carried in the vehicle on which the camper is mounted; and

(c) Are mounted on a properly registered vehicle.

(2) Mopeds are considered vehicles for the purposes of vehicle registration and license plate display. The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director shall charge the fee required under RCW 46.17.200(1)(a) when issuing an original moped license plate. Mopeds are exempt from personal property taxes and vehicle excise taxes imposed under chapter 82.44 RCW.

(3) Wheelchair conveyances are considered vehicles for the purposes of vehicle registration and license plate display. Wheelchair conveyances that do not meet braking equipment requirements described in RCW 46.37.340 must be registered as mopeds. [2011 c 171 s 49; 2010 c 161 s 437.]

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session —2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.410 Commercial motor vehicles. (1) The department shall refuse to register a commercial motor vehicle that is owned by a motor carrier subject to RCW 46.32.080, 46.87.294, and 46.87.296 upon notification to the department by the Washington state patrol or the federal motor carrier safety administration that an out-of-service order has been placed on the department of transportation number issued to the motor carrier.

(2) The department shall revoke the vehicle registration of all commercial motor vehicles that are owned by a motor carrier subject to RCW 46.32.080, upon notification to the department by the Washington state patrol or the federal motor carrier safety administration that an out-of-service order has been placed on the department of transportation number issued to the motor carrier. The revocation must remain in effect until the department has been notified by the Washington state patrol that the out-of-service order has been rescinded.

(3) Except as provided in subsections (4) and (5) of this section, by June 30, 2009, any original or renewal application for registration of a commercial motor vehicle that is owned by a motor carrier subject to RCW 46.32.080 that is submitted to the department must be accompanied by:

(a) The department of transportation number issued to the motor carrier; and

(b) The federal taxpayer identification number of the motor carrier.

(4) By June 30, 2010, the requirements of subsection (3) of this section apply to any original or renewal application that is submitted to the department for registration of a commercial motor vehicle that is to be operated by an entity with authority under chapter 81.66, 81.68, 81.70, or 81.77 RCW, or by a household goods carrier with authority under chapter 81.80 RCW.

(5) By June 30, 2012, the requirements of subsection (3) of this section apply to any original or renewal application that is submitted to the department for registration of a commercial motor vehicle that is owned by a motor carrier subject to RCW 46.32.080, and that has a gross vehicle weight rating of 7,258 kilograms (16,001 pounds) or more. [2009 c 46 s 5; 2007 c 419 s 5. Formerly RCW 46.16.615.]

Findings—Short title—2007 c 419: See notes following RCW 46.16A.010.

RCW 46.16A.420 Farm vehicles—Farm exempt decal—Fee—Rules. (1) A farmer shall apply to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director for a farm exempt decal for a farm vehicle if the farm vehicle is exempt under RCW 46.16A.080(3). The farm exempt decal:

(a) Allows the farm vehicle to be operated on public highways as identified under RCW 46.16A.080(3);

(b) Must be displayed on the farm vehicle so that it is clearly visible from outside of the farm vehicle;

(c) Must identify that the farm vehicle is exempt from the registration requirements of this chapter; and

(d) Must be visible from the rear of the farm vehicle. This requirement for a farm exempt decal to be visible from the rear of the vehicle applies only to farm exempt decals issued after July 28, 2013.

(2) A farmer or the farmer's representative must apply for a farm exempt decal on a form furnished or approved by the department. The application must show:

(a) The name and address of the person who is the owner of the vehicle;

(b) A full description of the vehicle, including its make, model, year, the motor number or the vehicle identification number if the

vehicle is a motor vehicle, or the serial number if the vehicle is a trailer;

(c) The purpose for which the vehicle is principally used;

(d) The place where the farm vehicle is principally used or garaged; and

(e) Other information as required by the department upon application.

(3) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director shall collect the fee required under RCW 46.17.325 when issuing a farm exempt decal.

(4) A farm exempt decal may not be renewed. The status as an exempt vehicle continues until suspended or revoked for misuse, or when the vehicle is no longer used as a farm vehicle.

(5) The department may adopt rules to implement this section. [2013 c 299 s 1. Prior: 2010 c 161 s 409; 2010 c 8 s 9010; 1979 c 158 s 139; 1967 c 202 s 3. Formerly RCW 46.16.025.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.425 Farm vehicles based on gross weight—Farm tabs—Penalty. (1) Motor trucks, truck tractors, and tractors owned and operated by farmers may receive a reduction in gross weight license fees as described in RCW 46.17.330 only if the vehicle is used exclusively to transport:

(a) The farmer's own farm, orchard, dairy, or private sector cultured aquatic products as defined in RCW 15.85.020, from point of production to market or warehouse. Fish other than private sector cultured aquatic products or forestry products are not considered farm products;

(b) Supplies used on the farmer's farm; or

(c) Products owned by the farm as listed in (a) of this subsection for another farmer in the neighborhood on a seasonal or infrequent basis. This may only be for compensation other than money.

(2) Farm vehicles that meet the requirements provided in subsection (1)(a) through (c) of this section may receive a reduction in gross weight license fees if the farm is exempt from property taxes under RCW 84.36.630. The reduction is the reduced gross weight license fee provided in RCW 46.17.330. To qualify for the additional gross weight license fee reduction, the farmer must submit copies of the forms as required under RCW 84.36.630.

(3) An additional eight thousand pounds gross weight within the legal limits on farm vehicles may be used if the farmer is transporting the farmer's own farm machinery between the farmer's own farm or farms and for a distance of not more than thirty-five miles.

(4) The application for a reduced gross weight license fee must be made by the farmer or the farmer's authorized representative to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director on a form furnished or approved by the department and must contain a statement that the vehicle will be used subject to the limitations of this section.

(5) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director shall issue a unique series of license tabs for farm vehicles registered under this section. Farm tabs must be

placed on all farm vehicles registered under this section to indicate that the vehicle is registered as a farm vehicle. The department may substitute a special license plate for farm vehicles.

(6) It is a traffic infraction to operate a farm vehicle registered under this section on the public highways in violation of the limitations of this section. [2010 c 161 s 423; 1989 c 156 s 3; 1986 c 18 s 10. Prior: 1985 c 457 s 16; 1985 c 380 s 18; 1979 ex.s. c 136 s 45; 1977 c 25 s 1; 1969 ex.s. c 169 s 1; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.090; prior: 1957 c 273 s 13; 1955 c 363 s 6; prior: 1953 c 227 s 1; 1951 c 269 s 12; 1950 ex.s. c 15 s 1, part; 1949 c 220 s 10, part; 1947 c 200 s 15, part; 1941 c 224 s 1, part; 1939 c 182 s 3, part; 1937 c 188 s 17, part; Rem. Supp. 1949 s 6312-17, part; 1931 c 140 s 1, part; 1921 c 96 s 15, part; 1919 c 46 s 1, part; 1917 c 155 s 10, part; 1915 c 142 s 15, part; RRS s 6326, part. Formerly RCW 46.16.090.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Application—1989 c 156: See note following RCW 46.16A.455.

Effective date—Severability—1979 ex.s. c 136: See notes following RCW 46.63.010.

Unprocessed agricultural products, license for transport: RCW 20.01.120.

RCW 46.16A.428 Intermittent-use trailers—Permanent registration—Penalty—License plates—Definition—Rules. (1) A trailer in good working order that has a scale weight of two thousand pounds or less and is used only for participation in club activities, exhibitions, tours, and parades, and for occasional pleasure use, is considered an intermittent-use trailer and may be issued a permanent registration. To be eligible to receive a permanent registration, the registered owner of the intermittent-use trailer must:

(a) Apply for a permanent registration with the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director; and

(b) Pay the fee required under RCW 46.17.345.

(2) A trailer with a permanent registration under this section is exempt from annual registration renewal under RCW 46.16A.110.

(3) The permanent registration under this section expires when the trailer changes ownership, is permanently removed from the state, or is otherwise disposed of.

(4) A person in violation of this section is subject to a traffic infraction with a maximum fine of one hundred fifty dollars including all other applicable assessments and fees.

(5) An intermittent-use trailer:

(a) Must display a standard license plate;

(b) Is not eligible for personalization; and

(c) May not display a special license plate.

(6) In lieu of displaying a standard issue license plate required in subsection (5)(a) of this section, a person applying for a permanent registration under this section may apply to the department

to display a license plate that was issued by the department the year that the intermittent-use trailer was manufactured.

(7) For purposes of this section, "occasional pleasure use" means use that is not general or daily, but seasonal or sporadic and not more than once per week on average. "Occasional pleasure use" does not mean (a) being held for rent to the public or (b) use for commercial or business purposes.

(8) The department may adopt rules to implement this section. [2015 c 200 s 1.]

Effective date—2015 c 200: "This act takes effect January 1, 2017." [2015 c 200 s 5.]

RCW 46.16A.435 Off-road motorcycles—Declaration required—Contents. (1) The department shall establish a declaration subject to the requirements of chapter 5.50 RCW, which must be submitted by an off-road motorcycle owner when applying for on-road registration of the off-road motorcycle. In order to be registered for on-road use, an off-road motorcycle must travel on two wheels with a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and with handlebar-type steering control.

(2) Registration for on-road use of an off-road motorcycle is prohibited for dune buggies, snowmobiles, trimobiles, mopeds, pocket bikes, motor vehicles registered by the department, side-by-sides, utility vehicles, grey-market vehicles, off-road three-wheeled vehicles, and, as determined by the department, any other vehicles that were not originally certified by the manufacturer for use on public roads.

(3) The declaration must include the following:

(a) Documentation of a safety inspection to be completed by a licensed motorcycle dealer or repair shop in the state of Washington that must outline the vehicle information and certify that all off-road to on-road motorcycle equipment as required under RCW 46.61.705 meets the requirements outlined in state and federal law;

(b) Documentation that the licensed motorcycle dealer or repair shop did not charge more than one hundred dollars per safety inspection and that the entire safety inspection fee is paid directly and only to the licensed motorcycle dealer or repair shop;

(c) A statement that the licensed motorcycle dealer or repair shop is entitled to the full amount charged for the motorcycle safety inspection;

(d) A vehicle identification number verification that must be completed by a licensed motorcycle dealer or repair shop in the state of Washington; and

(e) A release signed by the owner of the off-road motorcycle and verified by the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director that releases the state from any liability and outlines that the owner understands that the original off-road motorcycle was not manufactured for on-road use and that it has been modified for use on public roads.

(4) The department must track off-road motorcycles in a separate registration category for reporting purposes. [2019 c 232 s 20; 2011 c 121 s 3.]

Effective date—2011 c 121: See note following RCW 46.04.363.

RCW 46.16A.440 Private use, single-axle trailers—Reduced license fee. Private use single-axle trailers of two thousand pounds scale weight or less may qualify for a reduced vehicle license fee described in RCW 46.17.350(1)(k). To qualify for the reduced vehicle license fee:

(1) The trailer must be operated upon public highways;

(2) The vehicle license fee must be collected annually for each registration year or fraction of a registration year; and

(3) The trailer must be operated for personal use of the owner and not held for rental to the public or used in any commercial or business endeavor. [2010 c 161 s 421; 2006 c 337 s 2; 2005 c 314 s 203. Formerly RCW 46.16.086.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective dates—2005 c 314 ss 110 and 201-206: See note following RCW 46.68.035.

Application—2005 c 314 ss 201-206, 301, and 302: See note following RCW 46.68.035.

Part headings not law—2005 c 314: See note following RCW 46.68.035.

Boat trailer fee: RCW 46.17.305.

RCW 46.16A.445 Street rod or custom vehicles. A vehicle registration issued to a street rod or custom vehicle under this chapter need not be an initial vehicle registration for that vehicle. [2011 c 114 s 5.]

Effective date—2011 c 114: See note following RCW 46.04.572.

RCW 46.16A.450 Trailers—Permanent license plates and registration—Penalty—Rules. (1) Trailers that are towed in combination with a truck, motor truck, truck tractor, road tractor, or tractor and used to transport loads in excess of forty thousand pounds combined gross weight may be issued a permanent license plate and registration. The permanent license plate and registration is valid until the trailer is sold, permanently removed from the state, or otherwise disposed of by the registered owner. The owner of the trailer shall:

(a) Apply for the permanent license plate and registration with the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent;

(b) Pay the combination trailer license plate fee required under RCW 46.17.250 in addition to any other fee or taxes due by law; and

(c) Return the license plate and registration certificate to the department if the trailer is sold, permanently removed from the state, or otherwise disposed of.

(2) The permanent license plate and registration authorized in subsection (1) of this section may not be issued to trailers that haul logs.

(3) A violation of this section or misuse of a permanent license plate may subject the registered owner to prosecution or denial, or both, of future permanent registration of any trailer.

(4) The department may adopt rules to implement this section for leased vehicles and other applications as necessary. [2010 c 161 s 418; 1998 c 321 s 32 (Referendum Bill No. 49, approved November 3, 1998); 1993 c 123 s 4. Formerly RCW 46.16.068.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Purpose—Severability—1998 c 321: See notes following RCW 82.14.045.

Contingent effective dates—1998 c 321 ss 23-42: See note following RCW 35.58.410.

Effective date of 1993 c 102 and c 123—1993 sp.s. c 23: See note following RCW 46.16A.455.

RCW 46.16A.455 Trucks, buses, and for hire vehicles based on gross weight. (1) **Auto stage, bus, for hire vehicle - more than six seats.** The declared gross weight for an auto stage, bus, or for hire vehicle, except taxicabs, with a seating capacity of more than six is determined by:

(a) Multiplying the number of seats, including the driver, times one hundred fifty pounds per seat;

(b) Adding the scale weight to the product derived in (a) of this subsection; and

(c) Locating the sum derived in (b) of this subsection in the registration fee based on declared gross weight table provided in RCW 46.17.355 and rounding up to the next greater weight.

(2) **Motor truck, road tractor, truck, truck tractor - sufficient declared gross weight required.** The declared gross weight for a motor truck, road tractor, truck, or truck tractor must have a sufficient declared gross weight, as required under chapter 46.44 RCW, to cover:

(a) Its empty scale weight plus the maximum load it will carry; and

(b) The empty scale weight of any trailer it will tow and the maximum load that the trailer will carry. The declared gross weight of the motor vehicle does not need to include the trailer if:

(i) The empty scale weight of the trailer and the maximum load the trailer will carry does not exceed four thousand pounds; or

(ii) The trailer is for personal use, such as a horse trailer, travel trailer, or utility trailer.

(3) **Motor truck, road tractor, truck, and truck tractor - exceeding six thousand pounds empty scale weight.** Every truck, motor truck, truck tractor, and tractor exceeding six thousand pounds empty scale weight registered under this chapter or chapter 46.87 RCW must be licensed for not less than one hundred fifty percent of its empty weight unless:

(a) The amount would exceed the legal limits described in RCW 46.44.041 or 46.44.042, in which event the vehicle must be licensed for the maximum weight authorized for the vehicle; or

(b) The vehicle is a fixed load vehicle.

(4) **Increasing declared gross weight.** The following provisions apply when increasing declared gross weight for a motor vehicle licensed under this section:

(a) The declared gross weight must be increased to the end of the current registration year when the declared gross weight remains at 12,000 pounds or less.

(b) For motor vehicles increasing to a declared gross weight of 14,000 pounds or more, the declared gross weight must be increased, at a minimum, to the expiration of the current declared gross weight license.

(c) The new license fee is one-twelfth of the annual license fee listed in RCW 46.17.355 for each of the number of months remaining in the registration period. The department shall:

(i) Apply credit to any gross weight license fees already paid for the full months remaining in the registration period;

(ii) Charge the monthly declared gross weight license fee required under RCW 46.17.360, in addition to any other fees or taxes due; and

(iii) Not apply credit to monthly declared gross weight license fees already used.

(d) (c) of this subsection does not apply to motor vehicles described in (a) of this subsection.

(e) Upon surrender of the current registration certificate or cab card, credit must be applied as described in (c) of this subsection.

(5) **Monthly license—Authorized.** The annual license fees required in RCW 46.17.355 for any motor vehicle or combination of vehicles having a declared gross weight of twelve thousand one pounds or more may be paid for any full registration month or months at one-twelfth of the annual license fee plus the monthly declared gross weight license fee required in RCW 46.17.360. This sum must be multiplied by the number of full months for which the fees are paid if for less than a full year.

(6) **Monthly license—Penalty.** Operation of a vehicle registered under subsection (5) of this section by any person upon the public highways after the expiration of the monthly license is a traffic infraction. The person shall pay a license fee for the vehicle involved covering an entire registration year's operation, less the fees for any registration month or months of the registration year already paid. If, within five days, a license fee for a full registration year has not been paid as required, the Washington state patrol, county sheriff, or city police shall impound the vehicle until the fees have been paid.

(7) **Camper, school bus—Exemptions.** (a) The weight of a camper must not be included when determining declared gross weight.

(b) Motor vehicles used for the transportation of school children or teachers to and from school and other school activities are exempt from subsection (1) of this section and the seating capacity fee provided in RCW 46.17.340. If the motor vehicle is used for any other purpose, it must be appropriately registered as required under this chapter.

(8) **Credit for unused license fee.** A registered owner of a motor vehicle with a declared gross weight of more than twelve thousand pounds may obtain credit for the unused portion of the license fee paid or transfer the credit to a new owner under the following conditions:

(a) The motor vehicle must have been recently sold or transferred to another owner, is no longer in the possession of the owner, or is reported destroyed under RCW 46.12.600;

(b) The available credit must be fifteen dollars or more;

(c) Credit will be given for any unused months of the declared gross weight license already purchased at the rate of one-twelfth for each full or partial month of registration;

(d) Credit only applies to license fees due under RCW 46.17.355 for the registration year for which it was purchased;

(e) Credit as used in this section may not be refunded. [2011 c 171 s 50; 2010 c 161 s 419; 2005 c 314 s 204. Prior: 2003 c 361 s 201; 2003 c 1 s 3 (Initiative Measure No. 776, approved November 5, 2002); 1994 c 262 s 8; 1993 sp.s. c 23 s 60; prior: 1993 c 123 s 5; 1993 c 102 s 1; 1990 c 42 s 105; 1989 c 156 s 1; prior: 1987 1st ex.s. c 9 s 4; 1987 c 244 s 3; 1986 c 18 s 4; 1985 c 380 s 15; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 64 s 1; 1969 ex.s. c 281 s 54; 1967 ex.s. c 118 s 1; 1967 ex.s. c 83 s 56; 1961 ex.s. c 7 s 11; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.070; prior: 1957 c 273 s 1; 1955 c 363 s 2; prior: 1951 c 269 s 9; 1950 ex.s. c 15 s 1, part; 1939 c 182 s 3, part; 1937 c 188 s 17, part; 1931 c 140 s 1, part; 1921 c 96 s 15, part; 1919 c 46 s 1, part; 1917 c 155 s 10, part; 1915 c 142 s 15, part; Rem. Supp. 1949 s 6312-17, part; RRS s 6326, part. Formerly RCW 46.16.070.]

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective dates—2005 c 314 ss 110 and 201-206: See note following RCW 46.68.035.

Application—2005 c 314 ss 201-206, 301, and 302: See note following RCW 46.68.035.

Part headings not law—2005 c 314: See note following RCW 46.68.035.

Application—2003 c 361 s 201: "Section 201 of this act is effective with registrations that are due or will become due August 1, 2003, and thereafter." [2003 c 361 s 704.]

Findings—2003 c 361: See note following RCW 82.38.030.

Effective dates—2003 c 361: See note following RCW 82.08.020.

Policies and purposes—2003 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 776): "This measure would require license tab fees to be $30 per year for motor vehicles and light trucks and would repeal certain government-imposed charges, including excise taxes and fees, levied on motor vehicles. Politicians promised "$30 license tabs are here to stay" and promised any increases in vehicle-related taxes, fees and surcharges would be put to a public vote. Politicians should keep their promises. As long as taxpayers must pay incredibly high sales taxes when buying motor vehicles (meaning state and local governments receive huge

windfalls of sales tax revenue from these transactions), the people want license tab fees to not exceed the promised $30 per year. Without this follow-up measure, "tab creep" will continue until license tab fees are once again obscenely expensive, as they were prior to Initiative 695. The people want a public vote on any increases in vehicle-related taxes, fees and surcharges to ensure increased accountability. Voters will require more cost-effective use of existing revenues and fundamental reforms before approving higher charges on motor vehicles (such changes may remove the need for any increases). Also, dramatic changes to transportation plans and programs previously presented to voters must be resubmitted. This measure provides a strong directive to all taxing districts to obtain voter approval before imposing taxes, fees and surcharges on motor vehicles. However, if the legislature ignores this clear message, a referendum will be filed to protect the voters' rights. Politicians should just do the right thing and keep their promises." [2003 c 1 s 1 (Initiative Measure No. 776, approved November 5, 2002).]

Construction—2003 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 776): "The provisions of this act are to be liberally construed to effectuate the intent, policies, and purposes of this act." [2003 c 1 s 9 (Initiative Measure No. 776, approved November 5, 2002).]

Intent—2003 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 776): "The people have made clear through the passage of numerous initiatives and referenda that taxes need to be reasonable and tax increases should always be a last resort. However, politicians throughout the state of Washington continue to ignore these repeated mandates.

The people expect politicians to keep their promises. The legislative intent of this measure is to ensure that they do.

Politicians are reminded:

(1) Washington voters want license tab fees to be $30 per year for motor vehicles unless voters authorize higher vehicle-related charges at an election.

(2) All political power is vested in the people, as stated in Article I, section 1 of the Washington state Constitution.

(3) The first power reserved by the people is the initiative, as stated in Article II, section 1 of the Washington state Constitution.

(4) When voters approve initiatives, politicians have a moral, ethical, and constitutional obligation to fully implement them. When politicians ignore this obligation, they corrupt the term "public servant."

(5) Any attempt to violate the clear intent and spirit of this measure undermines the trust of the people in their government and will increase the likelihood of future tax limitation measures." [2003 c 1 s 11 (Initiative Measure No. 776, approved November 5, 2002).]

Severability—Savings—2003 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 776): "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected. If the repeal of taxes in section 6 of this act is judicially held to impair any contract in existence as of the effective date of this act, the repeal shall apply to any other contract, including novation, renewal, or refunding (in the case of

bond contract)." [2003 c 1 s 10 (Initiative Measure No. 776, approved November 5, 2002).]

Repeal of taxes by 2003 c 1 s 6 (Initiative Measure No. 776): "If the repeal of taxes in section 6 of this act affects any bonds previously issued for any purpose relating to light rail, the people expect transit agencies to retire these bonds using reserve funds including accrued interest, sale of property or equipment, new voter approved tax revenues, or any combination of these sources of revenue. Taxing districts should abstain from further bond sales for any purpose relating to light rail until voters decide this measure. The people encourage transit agencies to put another tax revenue measure before voters if they want to continue with a light rail system dramatically changed from that previously represented to and approved by voters." [2003 c 1 s 7 (Initiative Measure No. 776, approved November 5, 2002).]

Effective date—1994 c 262 ss 8, 28: "Sections 8 and 28 of this act take effect July 1, 1994." [1994 c 262 s 29.]

Effective date of 1993 c 102 and c 123—1993 sp.s. c 23: "Chapter 102, Laws of 1993 and chapter 123, Laws of 1993 each take effect January 1, 1994." [1993 sp.s. c 23 s 66.]

Effective dates—1993 sp.s. c 23: See note following RCW 43.89.010.

Purpose—Effective dates—Application—Implementation—1990 c 42: See notes following RCW 46.68.090.

Application—1989 c 156: "This act first applies to the renewal of vehicle registrations that have a December 1990 or later expiration date and all initial vehicle registrations that are effective on or after January 1, 1990." [1989 c 156 s 5.]

Severability—Effective date—1987 1st ex.s. c 9: See notes following RCW 46.29.050.

Effective dates—1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 64: "Sections 1, 2, and 5 through 24 of this 1976 amendatory act shall take effect on July 1, 1976, and sections 3 and 4 of this 1976 amendatory act shall take effect on January 1, 1977. All current and outstanding valid licenses and permits held by licensees on July 1, 1976, shall remain valid until their expiration dates, but renewals and original applications made after July 1, 1976, shall be governed by the law in effect at the time such renewal or application is made." [1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 64 s 25.]

Severability—1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 64: "If any provision of this 1976 amendatory act, or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act, or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 64 s 26.]

Effective date—1969 ex.s. c 281: See note following RCW 46.37.160.

Effective dates—1967 ex.s. c 83: See RCW 47.26.910.

RCW 46.16A.460 Motorcycles and snow bikes—Concurrent, separate registrations—Declaration required—Department may adopt rules. (1) It is the intent of the legislature to create a concurrent licensing process to allow the owner of a motorcycle to maintain concurrent but separate registrations for the vehicle, for use as a motorcycle and for use as a snow bike.

(2) The department shall allow the owner of a motorcycle to maintain concurrent licenses for the vehicle for use as a motorcycle and for use as a snow bike. When the vehicle is registered as a motorcycle, the terms of the registration are those under this chapter that apply to motorcycles, including applicable fees. When the vehicle is registered as a snow bike, the terms of the registration are those under chapter 46.10 RCW that apply to snowmobiles, including applicable fees.

(3) The department shall establish a declaration subject to the requirements of *RCW 9A.72.085, which must be submitted by the motorcycle owner when initially applying for a snowmobile registration under chapter 46.10 RCW for the use of the converted motorcycle as a snow bike. The declaration must include a statement signed by the owner that a motorcycle that had been previously converted to a snow bike must conform with all applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards and state standards while in use as a motorcycle upon public roads, streets, or highways. Once submitted by the motorcycle owner, the declaration is valid until the vehicle is sold or the title is otherwise transferred.

(4) The department may adopt rules to implement this section. [2019 c 262 s 1.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 9A.72.085 was repealed by 2019 c 232 s 6, effective July 1, 2021.

Effective date—2019 c 262: "This act takes effect September 1, 2019." [2019 c 262 s 6.]

LIABILITY AND VIOLATIONS

RCW 46.16A.500 Liability of operator, owner, lessee for violations. Both a person operating a vehicle with the express or implied permission of the owner and the owner of the vehicle are responsible for any act or omission that is declared unlawful in this chapter. The primary responsibility is the owner's.

If the person operating the vehicle at the time of the unlawful act or omission is not the owner of the vehicle, the operator may accept the citation and execute the promise to appear on behalf of the owner. [2010 c 161 s 436; 1980 c 104 s 3; 1969 ex.s. c 69 s 2. Formerly RCW 46.16.500.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

RCW 46.16A.510 Immunity from liability for issuing a vehicle registration or license plates to nonroadworthy vehicle. The director, the state of Washington, and its political subdivisions are immune from civil liability arising from the issuance of a vehicle registration or license plates to a nonroadworthy vehicle. [2011 c 171 s 51; 1986 c 186 s 5. Formerly RCW 46.16.012.]

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

RCW 46.16A.520 Allowing unauthorized person to drive—Penalty. It is unlawful for any person in whose name a vehicle is registered knowingly to permit another person to drive the vehicle when the other person is not authorized to do so under the laws of this state. A violation of this section is a misdemeanor. [1987 c 388 s 10. Formerly RCW 46.16.011.]

Severability—1987 c 388: See note following RCW 46.20.342.

Allowing unauthorized child to drive: RCW 46.20.024.

RCW 46.16A.530 Unlawful to carry passengers for hire without vehicle registration. It is unlawful for the owner or operator of any vehicle not registered annually for hire or as an auto stage and for which additional seating capacity fee as required by this chapter has not been paid, to carry passengers therein for hire. [2011 c 171 s 52; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.180. Prior: 1937 c 188 s 20; RRS s 6312-20. Formerly RCW 46.16.180.]

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

RCW 46.16A.540 Overloading registered capacity—Additional registration—Penalties—Exceptions. It is a traffic infraction for any person to operate, or cause, permit, or suffer to be operated upon a public highway of this state any bus, auto stage, motor truck, truck tractor, or tractor, with passengers, or with a maximum gross weight, in excess of that for which the motor vehicle or combination is registered.

Any person who operates or causes to be operated upon a public highway of this state any motor truck, truck tractor, or tractor with a maximum gross weight in excess of the maximum gross weight for which the vehicle is registered shall be deemed to have set a new maximum gross weight and shall, in addition to any penalties otherwise provided, be required to purchase a new registration covering the new maximum gross weight, and any failure to secure such new registration is a traffic infraction. No such person may be permitted or required to purchase the new registration for a gross weight or combined gross weight which would exceed the maximum gross weight or combined gross weight allowed by law. This section does not apply to for hire vehicles, buses, or auto stages operating principally within cities and towns. [2011 c 171 s 53; 1986 c 18 s 13; 1979 ex.s. c 136 s 47;

1961 c 12 s 46.16.140. Prior: 1955 c 384 s 16; 1951 c 269 s 18; 1937 c 188 s 25, part; RRS s 6312-25, part. Formerly RCW 46.16.140.]

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Effective date—Severability—1979 ex.s. c 136: See notes following RCW 46.63.010.

RCW 46.16A.545 Overloading registered capacity—Penalties. Any person violating any of the provisions of RCW 46.16A.540 shall, upon a first offense, pay a penalty of not less than twenty-five dollars nor more than fifty dollars; upon a second offense pay a penalty of not less than fifty dollars nor more than one hundred dollars, and in addition the court may suspend the registration certificate of the vehicle for not more than thirty days; upon a third and subsequent offense pay a penalty of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than two hundred dollars, and in addition the court shall suspend the registration certificate of the vehicle for not less than thirty days nor more than ninety days.

Upon ordering the suspension of any registration certificate, the court or judge shall forthwith secure the registration certificate and mail it to the director. [2011 c 171 s 54; 1979 ex.s. c 136 s 48; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 64 s 5; 1961 c 12 s 46.16.145. Prior: 1951 c 269 s 19; 1937 c 188 s 25, part; RRS s 6312-25, part. Formerly RCW 46.16.145.]

Rules of court: *Monetary penalty schedule—IRLJ 6.2.*

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

Effective date—Severability—1979 ex.s. c 136: See notes following RCW 46.63.010.

Effective dates—Severability—1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 64: See notes following RCW 46.16A.455.

RCW 46.16A.550 Illegible license plate—Penalty. Until January 1, 2025, the penalty for a violation of RCW 46.16A.200(7)(c), relating to the use of license plate covers that make a license plate illegible, may only be a written warning. The warning must include information about the requirements of the law and the applicable penalty beginning January 1, 2025. [2024 c 84 s 2.]