



California Association of Licensed Repossessors "CALR" A Not-For-Profit Since 1961

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Law: Repossessors Tow Truck Rear Licenses Plate

VEHICLE CODE - VEH

DIVISION 3. REGISTRATION OF VEHICLES AND CERTIFICATES OF TITLE [4000 - 9808]

(Division 3 enacted by Stats. 1959, Ch. 3.)

CHAPTER 1. Original and Renewal of Registration; Issuance of Certificates of Title [4000 - 5506]

(Chapter 1 enacted by Stats. 1959, Ch. 3.)

ARTICLE 9. Display of Plates, Tabs, and Stickers [5200 - 5206]

(Article 9 enacted by Stats. 1959, Ch. 3.)

5201.

(a) License plates shall at all times be securely fastened to the vehicle for which they are issued so as to prevent the plates from swinging, shall be mounted in a position so as to be clearly visible, and so that the characters are upright and display from left to right, and shall be maintained in a condition so as to be clearly legible. The rear license plate shall be mounted not less than 12 inches nor more than 60 inches from the ground, and the front license plate shall be mounted not more than 60 inches from the ground, except as follows:

(1) The rear license plate on a tow truck or reposessor's tow vehicle may be mounted on the left-hand side of the mast assembly at the rear of the cab of the vehicle, not less than 12 inches nor more than 90 inches from the ground.

(2) The rear license plate on a tank vehicle hauling hazardous waste, as defined in Section 25117 of the Health and Safety Code, or asphalt material may be mounted not less than 12 inches nor more than 90 inches from the ground.

(3) The rear license plate on a truck tractor may be mounted at the rear of the cab of the vehicle, but not less than 12 inches nor more than 90 inches from the ground.

(4) The rear license plate of a vehicle designed by the manufacturer for the collection and transportation of garbage, rubbish, or refuse that is used regularly for the collection and transportation of that material by a person or governmental entity employed to collect, transport, and dispose of garbage, rubbish, or refuse may be mounted not less than 12 inches nor more than 90 inches from the ground.

(5) The rear license plate on a two-axle livestock trailer may be mounted 12 inches or more, but not more than 90 inches, from the ground.

(6) (A) The rear license plate on a dump bed motortruck equipped with a trailing, load bearing swing axle shall be mounted more than 12 inches, but not more than 107 inches, from the ground.

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(B) As used in this section, a trailing, load bearing swing axle is an axle which can be moved from a raised position to a position behind the vehicle that allows for the transfer of a portion of the weight of the vehicle and load to the trailing axle.

(b) A covering shall not be used on license plates except as follows:

(1) The installation of a cover over a lawfully parked vehicle to protect it from the weather and the elements does not constitute a violation of this subdivision. A peace officer or other regularly salaried employee of a public agency designated to enforce laws, including local ordinances, relating to the parking of vehicles may temporarily remove so much of the cover as is necessary to inspect any license plate, tab, or indicia of registration on a vehicle.

(2) The installation of a license plate security cover is not a violation of this subdivision if the device does not obstruct or impair the recognition of the license plate information, including, but not limited to, the issuing state, license plate number, and registration tabs, and the cover is limited to the area directly over the top of the registration tabs. No portion of a license plate security cover shall rest over the license plate number.

(c) A casing, shield, frame, border, product, or other device that obstructs or impairs the reading or recognition of a license plate by an electronic device operated by state or local law enforcement, an electronic device operated in connection with a toll road, high-occupancy toll lane, toll bridge, or other toll facility, or a remote emission sensing device, as specified in Sections 44081 and 44081.6 of the Health and Safety Code, shall not be installed on, or affixed to, a vehicle.

(d) (1) It is the intent of the Legislature that an accommodation be made to persons with disabilities and to those persons who regularly transport persons with disabilities, to allow the removal and relocation of wheelchair lifts and wheelchair carriers without the necessity of removing and reattaching the vehicle's rear license plate. Therefore, it is not a violation of this section if the reading or recognition of a rear license plate is obstructed or impaired by a wheelchair lift or wheelchair carrier and all of the following requirements are met:

(A) The owner of the vehicle has been issued a special identification license plate pursuant to Section 5007, or the person using the wheelchair that is carried on the vehicle has been issued a distinguishing placard under Section 22511.55.

(B) (i) The operator of the vehicle displays a decal, designed and issued by the department, that contains the license plate number assigned to the vehicle transporting the wheelchair.

(ii) The decal is displayed on the rear window of the vehicle, in a location determined by the department, in consultation with the Department of the California Highway Patrol, so as to be clearly visible to law enforcement.



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(2) Notwithstanding any other law, if a decal is displayed pursuant to this subdivision, the requirements of this code that require the illumination of the license plate and the license plate number do not apply.

(3) The department shall adopt regulations governing the procedures for accepting and approving applications for decals, and issuing decals, authorized by this subdivision.

(4) This subdivision does not apply to a front license plate.

(Amended by Stats. 2012, Ch. 769, Sec. 34.5. Effective January 1, 2013.)

The above is for references only, please refer to the sections of the Vehicle Code or any changes that may have occurred since the publication of this document.

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