



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

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Law: When can a vehicle be Repossessed

CIVIL CODE - CIV

DIVISION 3. OBLIGATIONS [1427 - 3272.9]

(Heading of Division 3 amended by Stats. 1988, Ch. 160, Sec. 14.)

PART 4. OBLIGATIONS ARISING FROM PARTICULAR TRANSACTIONS [1738 - 3273]

(Part 4 enacted 1872.)

TITLE 14. LIEN [2872 - 3081]

(Title 14 enacted 1872.)

CHAPTER 2b. Automobile Sales Finance Act [2981 - 2984.6]

(Chapter 2b added by Stats. 1961, Ch. 1626.)

2983.3.

(a) In the absence of default in the performance of any of the buyer's obligations under the contract, the seller or holder may not accelerate the maturity of any part or all of the amount due thereunder or repossess the motor vehicle.

(b) **If after default by the buyer**, the seller or holder repossesses or voluntarily accepts surrender of the motor vehicle, any person liable on the contract shall have a right to reinstate the contract and the seller or holder shall not accelerate the maturity of any part or all of the contract prior to expiration of the right to reinstate, unless the seller or holder reasonably and in good faith determines that any of the following has occurred:

(1) The buyer or any other person liable on the contract by omission or commission **intentionally provided false or misleading information of material importance on his or her credit application.**

(2) The buyer, any other person liable on the contract, or any permissive user in possession of the motor vehicle, in order to avoid repossession **has concealed the motor vehicle or removed it from the state.**

(3) The buyer, any other person liable on the contract, or any permissive user in possession of the motor vehicle, **has committed or threatens to commit acts of destruction, or has failed to take care of the motor vehicle in a reasonable manner**, so that the motor vehicle has become substantially impaired in value, or the buyer, any other person liable on the contract, or any nonoccasional permissive user in possession of the motor vehicle **has failed to take care of the motor vehicle in a reasonable manner**, so that the motor vehicle may become substantially impaired in value.

(4) The buyer or any other person liable on the contract has **committed, attempted to commit, or threatened to commit criminal acts of violence or bodily harm against an agent, employee, or officer of the seller or holder in connection with the seller's or holder's repossession of or attempt to repossess the motor vehicle.**



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(5) The buyer has knowingly used the motor vehicle, or has knowingly permitted it to be used, in connection with the commission of a criminal offense, other than an infraction, as a consequence of which the motor vehicle has been seized by a federal, state, or local agency or authority pursuant to federal, state, or local law.

(6) The motor vehicle has been seized by a federal, state, or local public agency or authority pursuant to (A) Section 1324 of Title 8 of the United States Code or Part 274 of Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations, (B) Section 881 of Title 21 of the United States Code or Part 9 of Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations, or (C) other federal, state, or local law, including regulations, and, pursuant to that other law, the seizing authority, as a precondition to the return of the motor vehicle to the seller or holder, prohibits the return of the motor vehicle to the buyer or other person liable on the contract or any third person claiming the motor vehicle by or through them or otherwise effects or requires the termination of the property rights in the motor vehicle of the buyer or other person liable on the contract or claimants by or through them.

(c) Exercise of the right to reinstate the contract shall be limited to once in any 12-month period and twice during the term of the contract.

(d) The provisions of this subdivision cover the method by which a contract shall be reinstated with respect to curing events of default which were a ground for repossession or occurred subsequent to repossession:

(1) Where the default is the result of the buyer's failure to make any payment due under the contract, the buyer or any other person liable on the contract shall make the defaulted payments and pay any applicable delinquency charges.

(2) Where the default is the result of the buyer's failure to keep and maintain the motor vehicle free from all encumbrances and liens of every kind, the buyer or any other person liable on the contract shall either satisfy all encumbrances and liens or, in the event the seller or holder satisfies the encumbrances and liens, the buyer or any other person liable on the contract shall reimburse the seller or holder for all reasonable costs and expenses incurred therefor.

(3) Where the default is the result of the buyer's failure to keep and maintain insurance on the motor vehicle, the buyer or any other person liable on the contract shall either obtain the insurance or, in the event the seller or holder has obtained the insurance, the buyer or any other person liable on the contract shall reimburse the seller or holder for premiums paid and all reasonable costs and expenses, including, but not limited to, any finance charge in connection with the premiums permitted by Section 2982.8, incurred therefor.

(4) Where the default is the result of the buyer's failure to perform any other obligation under the contract, unless the seller or holder has made a good faith determination that the default is so substantial as to be incurable, the buyer or any other person liable on the contract shall either cure the default or, if the seller or holder has performed the obligation, reimburse the seller or holder for all reasonable costs and expenses incurred in connection therewith.



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(5) Additionally, the buyer or any other person liable on the contract shall, in all cases, reimburse the seller or holder for all reasonable and necessary collection and repossession costs and fees incurred, including attorney's fees and legal expenses expended in retaking and holding the vehicle.

(e) If the seller or holder denies the right to reinstatement under subdivision (b) or paragraph (4) of subdivision (d), the seller or holder shall have the burden of proof that the denial was justified in that it was reasonable and made in good faith. If the seller or holder fails to sustain the burden of proof, the seller or holder shall not be entitled to a deficiency, but it shall not be presumed that the buyer is entitled to damages by reason of the failure of the seller or holder to sustain the burden of proof.

(f) This section shall not apply to a loan made by a lender licensed under Division 9 (commencing with Section 22000) or Division 10 (commencing with Section 24000) of the Financial Code.

(Amended by Stats. 1987, Ch. 448, Sec. 5.)

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

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