

Date of Hearing: April 7, 2026

Counsel: Ilan Zur

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Nick Schultz, Chair

AB 1913 (Soria) – As Amended March 19, 2026

As Proposed to be Amended in Committee

SUMMARY: Authorizes an employee or volunteer registered with a specified law enforcement agency to operate emergency equipment if they complete an emergency equipment training. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Authorizes an employee of, or a volunteer registered with, a specified law enforcement agency, to operate emergency equipment pursuant to this bill.
- 2) Requires an employee or volunteer described above, in order to operate emergency equipment, to complete training that includes all of the following:
 - a) A classroom portion of at least 16 hours taught by an instructor who meets or exceeds the standards adopted by the specified law enforcement agency for the operation of emergency equipment.
 - b) A driver training portion of at least 14 hours that includes directly-supervised behind-the-wheel training by an instructor approved by the specified law enforcement agency, and who possesses a minimum of five years of experience as an emergency vehicle operator.
 - c) A written emergency equipment operation examination.
- 3) Requires instructors for the training program to meet both of the following requirements:
 - a) Possess a valid California class A or class B license, or alternatively, possess a class C license having completed the emergency equipment operation training under this bill and possessing at least five years of experience operating emergency equipment.
 - b) Be certified as a qualified training instructor or training officer by the State of California, the federal government, or a county training officers' association.
- 4) Requires a training program participant to possess a valid California class C license.
- 5) Defines "emergency equipment," for purposes of the above, to mean a motor vehicle operated under a class A or class B driver's license (which includes a combination of vehicles if a towed vehicle has a gross weight exceeding 10,000 pounds, a vehicle towing more than one vehicle, a trailer bus, all class B and C vehicles, a vehicle with a gross weight exceeding 26,000 pounds, a single vehicle with three or more axles, as specified, a bus with a gross weight exceeding 26,000 pounds, except a trailer bus, a farm labor vehicle, a single vehicle with three or more axles or with a gross weight exceeding 26,000 pounds towing

another vehicle with a gross weight of 10,000 or less, a house car over 40 feet, as specified, and all class C vehicles) that is used to travel to and from the scene of an emergency situation, to and from a place where emergency equipment is repaired or repositioned or to transport equipment used in the control of an emergency situation and that is owned, leased, rented by, or under the exclusive control of a specified law enforcement agency.

- 6) Expands the definition of a class C motor vehicle to include emergency equipment, as defined above, provided the equipment is operated by a person who has completed, or is currently participating in, the emergency equipment training established by this bill.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires an applicant for a driver's license to submit to an examination appropriate to the type of motor vehicle or combination of vehicles the application desires a license to drive. (Veh. Code, § 12804.9, subd. (b).)
- 2) Provides that a class A vehicle includes the following: a combination of vehicles if a vehicle being towed has a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds, a vehicle towing more than one vehicle, a trailer bus, and the operation of all vehicles under class B and class C. (Veh. Code, § 12804.9, subd. (b)(1).)
- 3) Provides that a class B vehicle includes the following: a single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds, single vehicle with three or more axles, as specified, a bus with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds, except a trailer bus, a farm labor vehicle, a single vehicle with three or more axles or a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds towing another vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less, a house car over 40 feet in length, and the operation of all vehicles covered under class C. (Veh. Code, § 12804.9, subd. (b)(2).)
- 4) Provides that a class C vehicle includes the following: a two-axle vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,000 pounds or less, as specified, a two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen when towing a trailer coach not exceeding 9,000 pounds, a house car of 40 feet in length or less, a three-axle vehicle weighing 6,000 pounds gross or less, a house car of 40 feet in length or less or a vehicle towing another vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less, a two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen when towing either a trailer coach or a fifth-wheel travel trailer not exceeding 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating, as specified, a two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen when towing a fifth-wheel travel trailer exceeding 10,000 pounds, but not exceeding 15,000 pounds, as specified, a vehicle or combination of vehicles with a gross combination weight rating of 26,000 pounds or less, as specified, firefighting equipment, provided that the equipment is operated by a person who holds a firefighter endorsement, as specified; a motorized scooter, a bus with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,000 pounds or less, except a trailer bus. (Veh. Code, § 12804.9, subd. (b)(3).)
- 5) Authorizes certain volunteer firefighters to operate firefighting equipment, as follows:
 - a) Specifies that to operate firefighting equipment, a driver, including a till operator, must do either of the following:

- i) Obtain and maintain a class A or B license, as specified, and, as appropriate, for the size and configuration of the firefighting equipment operated. (Veh. Code, § 12804.11, subd. (a)(2).)
 - ii) Obtain and maintain a firefighter endorsement issued by the DMV and obtain and maintain a class C license, a restricted class A license, as specified, or a noncommercial class B license, as specified. (Veh. Code, § 12804.11, subd. (a)(1).)
- b) Provides that to qualify for a firefighter endorsement, the driver shall:
- i) Provide the DMV with proof of current employment as a firefighter or registration as a volunteer firefighter and evidence of fire equipment operation training, as specified, subject to the following:
 - (1) Evidence of fire equipment operation training means the applicant successfully completed Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator 1A taught by an instructor registered with the Office of the State Fire Marshal or fire department driver training that meets certain requirements, including at least 16 hours of classroom instruction and at least 14 hours of directly supervised behind-the-wheel driver training.
 - (2) Requires driver training to be conducted by a person who is registered with the Office of the State Fire Marshal to instruct a Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator 1A course, or by another person who possesses a minimum of five years of fire service experience, possesses a valid California class A or B license or a class A or B license restricted to the operation of firefighting equipment or a class C license with a firefighter endorsement, and is certified as a qualified training instructor or training officer, as specified.
 - ii) Pass the written firefighter examination developed by the DMV with the cooperation of the Office of the State Fire Marshal.
 - iii) Upon application and every two years thereafter, submit medical information on a form approved by the DMV. (Veh. Code, § 12804.11, subds. (a) & (b).)
- c) Subjects a driver of firefighting equipment to the requirement to obtain a firefighter endorsement or a class A or B license, as specified, if both the following conditions exist:
- i) The equipment is operated by a person employed as a firefighter by a federal or state agency, by a regularly organized fire department of a city, county, city and county, or district, or by a tribal fire department or registered as a volunteer member of a regularly organized fire department having official recognition of the city, county, city and county, or district in which the department is located, or of a tribal fire department.
 - ii) The motor vehicle is used to travel to and from the scene of an emergency situation, or to transport equipment used in the control of an emergency situation, and which is owned, leased, or rented by, or under the exclusive control of, a federal or state agency, a regularly organized fire department of a city, county, city and county, or district, a volunteer fire department having official recognition of the city, county,

- city and county, or district in which the department is located, or a tribal fire department. (Veh. Code, § 12804.11, subd. (d).)
- d) Defines “firefighting equipment” to mean a motor vehicle, that meets the definition of a class A or class B vehicle, that is used to travel to and from the scene of an emergency situation, or to transport equipment used in the control of an emergency situation, and that is owned, leased, or rented by, or under the exclusive control of, a federal or state agency, a regularly organized fire department of a city, county, city and county, or district, or a volunteer fire department having official recognition of the city, county, city and county, or district in which the department is located. (Veh. Code, § 12804.11, subd. (f).)
 - 6) Defines an authorized emergency vehicle to mean any publicly owned vehicle operated by any federal, state, or local agency, department, or district employing peace officers as defined, for use by those officers in the performance of their duties (Veh. Code, § 165, subd. (b)(1).)
 - 7) Provides that a public employee is not liable for civil damages on account of personal injury to or death of any person or damage to property resulting from the operation, in the line of duty, of an authorized emergency vehicle while responding to an emergency call or when in the immediate pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law, or when responding to but not upon returning from a fire alarm or other emergency call. (Veh. Code, § 17004.)
 - 8) States that the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle is exempt from a variety of specified Vehicle Code requirements, under all of the following conditions:
 - a) If the vehicle is being driven in response to an emergency call or while engaged in rescue operations or is being used in the immediate pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law or is responding to, but not returning from, a fire alarm, except that fire department vehicles are exempt whether directly responding to an emergency call or operated from one place to another as rendered desirable or necessary by reason of an emergency call and operated to the scene of the emergency or operated from one fire station to another or to some other location by reason of the emergency call.
 - b) If the driver of the vehicle sounds a siren as may be reasonably necessary and the vehicle displays a lighted red lamp visible from the front as a warning to other drivers and pedestrians. (Veh. Code, § 21055.)
 - 9) Requires that every authorized emergency vehicle to be equipped with at least one steady burning red warning lamp visible from at least 1,000 feet to the front of the vehicle, as specified, and provides that emergency vehicles may display revolving, flashing, or steady red warning lights to the front, sides or rear of the vehicles. (Veh. Code, § 25252.)
 - 10) Authorizes an authorized emergency vehicle, where the vehicle is being driven in response to an emergency call, as specified, and the driver sounds a siren and displays a lighted red lamp, to display a flashing white light from a gaseous discharge lamp designed and used for the purpose of controlling official traffic control signals. (Veh. Code, § 25258, subd. (a).)

- 11) Authorizes an authorized emergency vehicle used by a specified peace officer or probation officer, in the performance of the peace officer's duties, to additionally display a steady or flashing blue warning light visible from the front, sides, or rear of the vehicle. (Veh. Code, § 25258, subd. (b)(1).)
- 12) Requires a probation officer, before they operate an emergency vehicle with a blue warning light, to complete a four-hour classroom training course regarding the operation of emergency vehicles that is certified by the Standards and Training for Corrections Division of the Board of State and Community Corrections, however, this does not expand any existing authority of a probation officer to conduct a high-speed vehicle pursuit or change any existing training requirements for high-speed vehicle pursuits.. (Veh. Code, § 25258, subd. (b)(2)-(3).)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Author's Statement:** According to the author, "While effective law enforcement and public safety protection often requires the use of specialized vehicles, many law enforcement staff and volunteers do not possess a class A or B driver license that would normally be required to operate this equipment. AB 1913 will allow law enforcement staff and volunteers to operate specified emergency equipment with a class C driver license having completed a rigorous course of training. This bill will protect public safety by allowing more qualified individuals to operate certain equipment without a specific type of commercial driver license without sacrificing training and education on the part of the operators."
- 2) **Effect of this Bill:** This bill is largely modelled after the framework that permits volunteer firefighters to operate class A and B equipment. Currently, certain volunteer firefighters are permitted to operate firefighting equipment if they complete certain training. Firefighting equipment means class A or B vehicles that are used to travel to and from an emergency situation, as specified, that is owned, leased, or under the exclusive control of a federal, state, or local agency, a fire department, or an officially recognized volunteer fire department. (Veh. Code, § 12804.11, subd. (f).) In order to operate such equipment, a driver must either obtain and maintain a class A or B license, or obtain and maintain a firefighter endorsement issued by the DMV, and obtain and maintain a class C license, among other license options. (Veh. Code, § 12804.11, subd. (a)(1).) To qualify for a firefighter endorsement, the driver must provide the DMV with: 1) proof of employment as a firefighter or volunteer firefighter and evidence of fire equipment operation training (which includes, among other things, at least 16 hours of classroom instruction and at least 14 hours of directly supervised behind-the-wheel driver training); 2) pass the written firefighter examination; and 3) submit medical information on a form approved by the DMV. (Veh. Code, § 12804.11, subds. (a) & (b).)

This bill authorizes an employee or volunteer registered with certain law enforcement agencies to operate emergency equipment if they complete an emergency equipment training. Similar to the firefighter endorsement framework, the training must include 16 hours of classroom instruction taught by an instructor who meets the standards adopted by the law enforcement agency, 14 hours of directly supervised behind-the-wheel training by an approved instructor with at least five years of experience as an emergency vehicle operator, and a written emergency equipment operation examination. Training instructors must possess

a valid class A or B license, or a class C license if they have completed the emergency equipment operation training established by this bill and possess at least five years of experience operating emergency equipment. Additionally, instructors must be certified as a qualified training instructor or officer by the State, federal government, or a county training officers' association.

This creates an avenue for employees or volunteers with law enforcement agencies to transport certain heavy-duty vehicles to and from the scene of an emergency. Specifically, it would authorize such persons to operate emergency vehicles to travel to and from the scene of an emergency situation, to and from a place where emergency equipment is repaired or repositioned, or to transport equipment used in the control of an emergency situation and that is owned, leased, rented by, or under the exclusive control of a specified law enforcement agency. In terms of the type of vehicles this would apply to, it would encompass a combination of vehicles if a towed vehicle has a gross weight exceeding 10,000 pounds, a vehicle towing more than one vehicle, a trailer bus, all class B and C vehicles, a vehicle with a gross weight exceeding 26,000 pounds, a single vehicle with three or more axles, as specified, a bus with a gross weight exceeding 26,000 pounds, except a trailer bus, a farm labor vehicle, a single vehicle with three or more axles or with a gross weight exceeding 26,000 pounds towing another vehicle with a gross weight of 10,000 or less, a house car over 40 feet, as specified, and all class C vehicles.

Lastly, this bill expands the definition of a class C motor vehicle to include emergency equipment, as defined above, provided the equipment is operated by a person who has completed, or is currently participating in, the emergency equipment training established by this bill. The author may wish to clarify, consistent with the firefighter endorsement framework, that this only applies to equipment operated by persons who have actually completed the training. Persons currently participating in the training may not have been sufficiently trained to use such equipment.

Additionally, the author may wish to clarify this bill's application to "an employee of, or a volunteer registered with, a law enforcement agency, as defined in Section 830.1 or 830.2." Penal Code sections 830.1 and 830.2 describe which category of persons are considered peace officers under California law. While there are references to the agencies that employ such persons, those sections are largely focused on particular persons who are peace officers, and do not clearly define "law enforcement agency."

- 3) **Argument in Support:** According to the *California State Sheriffs' Association*, AB 1913, "would allow law enforcement employees and volunteers to operate specified emergency equipment with a class C driver license after having completed classroom and behind-the-wheel training.

"In many counties, deputy sheriffs and sheriff's office volunteers are often among the first to be called to emergency scenes, including wildfires, search and rescues, vehicle accidents, and natural disasters. Special equipment is normally needed to mitigate the effects of these emergency incidents and save lives. These employees and volunteers may be asked to operate specialty equipment including mobile command posts and vehicles that transport other equipment on heavy trailers. Much of this equipment ordinarily requires an operator to possess a class A or B driver license, which reduces the pool of people available to operate

this equipment and subsequently respond. Sheriffs' offices struggle with recruiting sworn and non-sworn personnel (volunteers), especially those with class A or B driver licenses.

"AB 1913 creates a common-sense solution to this problem. The bill allows employees or volunteers who have a class C license and complete classroom education and behind-the-wheel training provided by trained instructors to operate certain types of equipment in specified situations without having to obtain a class A or B license. This approach also carries the benefit of ensuring operators are trained and experienced without creating expensive new licensing or certification burdens on state agencies."

4) **Argument in Opposition:** None received.

5) **Prior Legislation:**

- a) SB 349 (Archuleta), of the 2025-2026 Legislative Session, would have authorized parole officers to display blue warning lights from their emergency vehicles in the performance of their official duties if an officer completes a specified four-hour classroom training course certified by the Commission on Correctional Peace Officers Standards and Training. AB 349 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- b) SB 1021 (Archuleta), of the 2023-2024 Legislative Session, was substantially similar to SB 349. SB 1021 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- c) SB 287 (Grove), Chapter 610, Statutes of 2021, authorized drivers with a class C driver's license with a trailer endorsement to tow a trailer between 10,000 and 15,000 pounds gross vehicle weight using a gooseneck trailer hitch if the towing is not for compensation or commercial purposes and the vehicle used to tow the vehicle is a two axle-vehicle with a combined gross vehicle weight rating of less than 26,000 pounds.
- d) SB 587 (Atkins), Chapter 286, Statutes of 2017, authorized probation officers to display a blue warning light on their authorized emergency vehicles if the officer completes a four-hour training course regarding the operation of emergency vehicles certified by the Standards and Training for Corrections division of the Board of State and Community Corrections.
- e) AB 2438 (Lowenthal), Chapter 97, Statutes of 2014, allowed an individual who is training a firefighter how to use firefighting equipment (e.g., to drive a fire engine) to possess a class C license with a firefighter endorsement, provided they meet all other statutory requirements
- f) AB 82 (Jeffries), Chapter 92, Statutes of 2011, required a person who operates firefighting equipment to obtain either a class A or B license as appropriate for the size and configuration of the firefighting equipment or a class C license, a restricted class A license, or a noncommercial class B license with a firefighter endorsement.
- g) AB 1648 (Jeffries), Chapter 360, Statutes of 2010, changed the type of driver's license required to operate firefighting equipment from a class A or B commercial driver's license or a restricted firefighting license to a class C license with a firefighter endorsement and allows a person without such an endorsement to operate firefighting

equipment for training purposes during non-emergencies provided the driver is accompanied by a properly licensed driver.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California State Sheriffs' Association (Sponsor)
California Police Chiefs Association

Opposition

None submitted

Analysis Prepared by: Ilan Zur / PUB. S. / (916) 319-3744