

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1913 (Soria) – As Amended April 14, 2026

Policy Committee:	Public Safety	Vote:	9 - 0
	Transportation		15 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes an employee of, or volunteer registered with, a law enforcement agency to operate emergency equipment if the employee or volunteer has a valid class C driver license and has completed training on the operation of such vehicles, as specified by this bill.

Specifically, this bill establishes required components of such a training course—(1) a classroom portion of at least 16 hours taught by an instructor who meets or exceeds the standards adopted by the law enforcement agency for the operation of emergency equipment; (2) a driver training portion of at least 14 hours that includes directly supervised behind-the-wheel training by an instructor approved by law enforcement and who possesses a minimum of five years of experience as an emergency vehicle operator; and (3) a written emergency equipment operation examination. In addition, the bill requires an instructor of such a training course (1) possess (a) both a valid California class A or class B license, or, alternatively, a class C license, having completed the emergency equipment operation training described in this bill, and (b) at least five years of experience operating emergency equipment, and (2) be certified as a qualified training instructor or training officer by the State of California, the federal government or a county training officers’ association. A training program participant must possess a valid California class C license.

The bill defines emergency equipment as a motor vehicle operated under a class A, B or C driver’s license 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 law enforcement agency, and adds to the list of vehicles under a class C license emergency equipment, provided the equipment is operated by a person who has completed the emergency equipment training described in this bill.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Negligible state costs.

COMMENTS:

Existing law provides for various classes of driver licenses, issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Possession of a class A or a class B driver license generally qualifies a driver to operate larger commercial vehicles, whereas possession of a class C driver license generally qualifies a driver to operate smaller vehicles oftentimes referred to as passenger vehicles.

Law enforcement agencies report that those working in law enforcement operate emergency equipment that is relatively large and, in most circumstances, requires the driver to possess a class A or B license to legally operate the vehicle. However, law enforcement agencies note difficulty finding personnel that are trained and experienced to operate such large equipment. This is especially true of law enforcement agencies that oftentimes rely on non-sworn volunteers to respond to emergencies. Or, as described by the bill's sponsor, the California State Sheriffs' Association:

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.

This bill provides a compromise solution between the needs of law enforcement and existing law, in that it allows a person working in law enforcement and in possession of a class C license to operate emergency equipment, but only if that person has completed specified training on operation of that equipment.

There is no opposition registered to this bill.

The author has proposed amendments to this bill that modify the bill's definition of "emergency equipment," so that the term, as defined by section 1 of the bill, will read:

(e)(1) For purposes of this section, "emergency equipment" means a motor vehicle or combination of vehicles that meets the definition of a class A or class B vehicle described in subdivision (b) of Section 12804.9, subject to the following limitations:

(A) The motor vehicle shall not exceed 45 feet in length and the towed vehicle, if applicable, shall not exceed 30,000 pounds gross vehicle weight or gross vehicle weight rating, whichever is greater.

(B) The motor vehicle or combination of vehicles shall be used to travel to and from the scene of an emergency situation, to and from a place where the 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 law enforcement agency described in Section 830.1 or 830.2 of the Penal Code.

(2) For purposes of this section, an authorized emergency vehicle that has been issued a license by the Commissioner of the California Highway

Patrol to operate in response to emergency calls is not “emergency equipment.”

(3) Vehicles operated pursuant to this section are not exempt from the provisions of Division 15 (commencing with Section 35000).

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