

## ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1913 (Soria)

As Amended May 7, 2026

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

Authorizes an employee or volunteer registered with a specified law enforcement agency to operate emergency equipment if they complete an emergency equipment training.

**Major Provisions**

- 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 the emergency equipment training established by this bill.

## COMMENTS

### **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."

### **Arguments in Support**

According to the *California State Sheriffs' Association*, the sponsor of this bill, 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."

### **Arguments in Opposition**

None submitted.

## FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, "Negligible state costs."

**VOTES**

**ASM PUBLIC SAFETY: 9-0-0**

**YES:** Schultz, Alanis, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Lackey, Nguyen, Ramos, Sharp-Collins

**UPDATED**

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