

**THIRD READING**

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Bill No: SB 962  
Author: Archuleta (D)  
Amended: 5/14/26  
Vote: 21

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SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: 12-0, 4/7/26

AYES: Cortese, Strickland, Archuleta, Arreguín, Blakespear, Gonzalez, Grayson, Menjivar, Richardson, Seyarto, Valladares, Wiener

NO VOTE RECORDED: Dahle

SENATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE: 6-0, 4/14/26

AYES: Arreguín, Seyarto, Caballero, Cortese, Pérez, Wiener

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 5/14/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

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**SUBJECT:** Emergency vehicles: blue warning lights

**SOURCE:** California Correctional Peace Officers Association

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**DIGEST:** This bill authorizes 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 (CPOST).

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Authorizes specified peace officers employed by the following public safety agencies in the performance of their duties, to display a steady or flashing blue warning light visible from the front, sides, or rear of their authorized emergency vehicle:

- a) Sheriffs, undersheriffs, deputy sheriffs, chiefs of police, chiefs or directors of consolidated municipal public safety agencies that perform police functions, police officers, harbor police, chief executive of public safety agencies, marshals or deputy marshals of superior courts, port wardens, and district attorney inspectors or investigators;
  - b) California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers, University of California police, California State University police, correctional officers, members of the Office of Internal Affairs at the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Department of Fish and Game employees, Department of Parks and Recreation employees, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection employees, and marshals and police appointed by the Board of Directors of the California Exposition and State Fair;
  - c) The chief and coordinators of the Law Enforcement Branch of the Office of Emergency Services;
  - d) Park rangers;
  - e) Community college police and school district police;
  - f) Bay Area Rapid Transit District police, transit district peace officers, airport law enforcement; railroad police;
  - g) Legislative sergeants-at-arms;
  - h) Members of the California National Guard; and,
  - i) Probation officers. (Vehicle Code § 25258)
- 2) Provides that any law enforcement agency vehicle driven by a peace officer, including parole officers, in the performance of their duties is an “authorized emergency vehicle.” (Vehicle Code § 165.)
  - 3) Defines “parole officer” and limits the extent of their authority as follows:
    - a) To conditions of parole, probation, mandatory supervision, or post release community supervision by any person in this state on parole, probation, mandatory supervision, or post release community supervision.

- b) To the escape of any inmate or ward from a state or local institution.
  - c) To the transportation of persons on parole, probation, mandatory supervision, or post release community supervision.
  - d) To violations of any penal provisions of law which are discovered while performing the usual or authorized duties of the officer's employment.
  - e) To the rendering of mutual aid to any other law enforcement agency. (Penal Code § 830.5)
- 4) Creates the Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training to establish standards for the training and professional development of rank-and-file state correctional peace officers, as well as first-line and second-line supervisory state correctional peace officers. (Penal Code §13600)

This bill:

- 1) Designates this act as the Agent Joshua Byrd Memorial Act.
- 2) Authorizes parole officers to display a steady or flashing blue warning light visible from the front, sides, or rear of their emergency vehicle if they complete a 4-hour classroom training course regarding the operation of emergency vehicles that is certified by the Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training.
- 3) Specifies that the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation may install a blue warning light on an emergency vehicle operated by a parole officer upon appropriation by the Legislature.

### Comments

- 1) *Purpose of this bill.* According to the author, “Without blue warning lights, other law enforcement officers and first responders are less likely to recognize, assist and support parole officers in the performance of their duties. This is especially important in cases where an officer is transporting someone who is suffering from a medical emergency, such as in the case of Agent Joshue Byrd. Agent Byrd was shot and killed in the line of duty on July 17, 2025. Emergency services were unable to reach the scene, and parole officer vehicles present did not have emergency lights. Agent Byrd’s colleagues were unable to quickly

transport him to the ambulance's staging or the hospital itself, and he passed away from his injuries. When something like this happens, every second counts. The Parole Officers' branch of the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA) has been asking for blue lights on their vehicles for years. CDCR has consistently denied this request because of cost. Now, CDCR has issued a new policy allowing certain parole officers to be issued amber lights on their vehicles for celebrations. This new policy begs the question: why is CDCR willing to pay for a purely ceremonial light but not one that is proven to be lifesaving?"

- 2) *Blue Lights*. This bill authorizes parole officers to display a blue warning light to help better identify parole officers and their vehicles to the public and other law enforcement officers. Because vehicles driven by parole officers are defined as emergency vehicles, they are currently authorized to display flashing white, red, and amber lights. Blue lights, on the other hand, are largely limited to law enforcement vehicles only. However, the list of applicable entities is broad and includes probation officers performing significantly similar functions.

Parole officers can be involved in transporting individuals for urgent medical attention or responding quickly to a scene for support. The ability to display blue lights may help with recognition at the scene and the ability for expedited travel in emergency transport situations. A letter in support for SB 962 from the California Correctional Peace Officers Association echoes these points, "[t]his measure is grounded in the tragic and, we believe, preventable loss of Parole Agent Joshua Byrd, who was killed in the line of duty in July 2025. In that critical moment, the absence of vehicle recognition lights and sirens delayed the ability of fellow officers to transport Agent Byrd to emergency medical care. His death underscores the real-world consequences of a gap in basic safety equipment for frontline parole officers and highlights the urgent need to provide tools that can save lives in emergency situations."

- 3) *Precedent*. This bill mirrors a previous change made through SB 587 (Atkins, Chapter 286, Statutes 2017), which authorized probation officers to use blue lights on their emergency vehicles after training. Supporters argue that the duties of parole and probation officers are similar enough to justify aligning their access to display blue warning lights from their emergency vehicles. In order to utilize blue lights authorized under this bill, a parole officer must first complete a four-hour classroom training course on the operation of emergency

vehicles that is certified by the Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training.

- 4) *Emergency Vehicles and High-speed pursuit.* This bill does not expand any existing authority of parole officers to conduct high-speed vehicle pursuit, nor does it change any existing training requirements for high-speed vehicle pursuit.

### **Related/Prior Legislation**

SB 349 (Archuleta, 2025) – This bill was substantially similar to SB 962. It would have authorized parole officers to display a blue warning light from their emergency vehicles if the officer completes a certified training course on the operation of emergency vehicles. *This bill failed passage in Senate Appropriations.*

SB 1021 (Archuleta, 2024) – This bill would have authorized parole officers to display the blue warning light from their emergency vehicles if they complete a 4-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. *This bill failed passage in Senate Appropriations.*

SB 587 (Atkins, Chapter 286, Statutes 2017) – This bill authorizes probation officers to display a blue warning light on their authorized emergency vehicles if the officer completes an emergency vehicle operations course certified by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) would incur unknown, significant one-time costs, potentially as high as the low millions of dollars, if funds are appropriated and the department exercises the authority granted in this bill to install light bars on parole officer vehicles. These costs would be lower to the extent CDCR only installs light bars on a portion of its parole officer vehicles. (General Fund)
- CDCR would also incur unknown one-time costs, likely in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars, for parole officer staff time associated with completion of the four-hour training course, and for costs associated with the provision of training through CPOST. Actual costs would depend upon how

many parole officers would be directed to complete training. CDCR further estimates one-time costs in the low tens of thousands of dollars to develop the four-hour classroom training course. (General Fund)

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 5/14/26)

California Correctional Peace Officers Association (source)  
California Association of Highway Patrolmen  
Peace Officers Research Association of California

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 5/14/26)

None received

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\*\*\*\* **END** \*\*\*\*