
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Vision screenings

- Permits a person renewing a driver's license to have the required vision screening conducted at a licensed optometrist's or ophthalmologist's office within 90 days prior to license renewal, instead of at the deputy registrar office.
- Permits a person who fails the vision screening at the driver examiner's office (after failing it at a deputy registrar office) to have a vision screening at a licensed optometrist's or ophthalmologist's office.

Disabled veteran vehicle registration

- Requires the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to allow a disabled veteran to receive a license plate that recognizes military service or valor without paying any registration taxes or fees, for up to two motor vehicles.

Deputy registrar service fee

- Requires the Registrar to adopt rules to set the deputy registrar service fee at \$5 (instead of a fee between \$3.50 and \$5.25, as in recently enacted prior law).

State Fire Marshal CDL exemption

- Exempts a qualified person, who operates fire equipment for the State Fire Marshal, from the requirement to hold a commercial driver's license (the same exemption applies to a qualified person who operates fire equipment for a local fire department).

Salvage certificate of title, notary exemption

- Exempts a power of attorney (or other appropriate document) from notarization and verification requirements when an insurance company, under certain circumstances, applies for a salvage certificate of title.

Abolished funds

- Eliminates the Multi-Agency Radio Communications System Fund, which the Department of Public Safety (DPS) used prior to 2011 for MARCS-related equipment maintenance. (Those functions are now conducted by the Department of Administrative Services.)
- Eliminates the Public Safety Investigative Unit Salvage and Exchange Fund and redirects money received by the DPS Investigative Unit (from the sale of excess motor vehicles and other equipment) to the Ohio Investigative Unit Fund.

Infrastructure Protection Fund

- Permits DPS to use the funds deposited into the Infrastructure Protection Fund for the Department's operating expenses.

Reinstatement Fee Debt Reduction and Amnesty Program

- Extends the “Driver’s License Reinstatement Fee Debt Reduction and Amnesty Program” from July 31, 2019, to December 31, 2019.

Vision screenings

(R.C. 4507.12)

The act creates alternative ways for a person to certify that the person meets the vision standards for obtaining a driver’s license. Under prior law, vision screenings could only take place at a deputy registrar office. The act, however, permits a person to have a vision screening at a licensed optometrist’s or ophthalmologist’s office of the person’s choice, at both of the following times:

- Within 90 days prior to license renewal if the person applying knows that he or she meets the vision standards, but is not capable of passing the vision screening conducted at a deputy registrar office; and
- After a person fails the vision screening at both a deputy registrar office and the driver examiner’s office.

The act requires the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to create forms to be filled out at the optometrist or ophthalmologist’s office. A person must then bring the filled-out forms to a deputy registrar to verify that the vision screening results meet the vision standards required for licensing. If the results meet the vision standards, the deputy registrar may renew the driver’s license or issue a driver’s license to the person.

If a person fails all of the vision screenings, the deputy registrar is prohibited from issuing a license until the person’s vision is corrected to meet the vision standards.

Disabled veteran vehicle registration

(R.C. 4503.29)

The act permits a disabled veteran with a service connected disability rated at 100% by the federal Veterans’ Administration to receive military license plates under an existing administrative program without paying registration taxes and fees, for up to two motor vehicles. The military license plates are designed to recognize a specific military branch, a particular combat zone, or a medal that the veteran was awarded.

Under prior law, such a disabled veteran could only receive the benefit of obtaining license plates without paying registration taxes and fees for one motor vehicle and only if the veteran applied for the “Disabled Veteran” license plates (printed with the word “VETERAN” across the bottom and the International Symbol of Access on the side).⁹¹ The act allows

⁹¹ R.C. 4503.41, not in the act.

disabled veterans more choices in the appearance of the license plates, while still receiving the same benefits regarding registration taxes and fees.

Under the act, the two-vehicle limit includes any motor vehicles registered under the “Disabled Veteran” license plate section. Thus, if a veteran has one vehicle registered with “Disabled Veteran” plates, the veteran may register only one additional vehicle with another military plate.

A veteran who requires the accessibility permitted by a license plate or windshield placard displaying the International Symbol of Access may apply for a temporary removable windshield placard without any service fee. This benefit is already established in law unchanged by the act.⁹²

Deputy registrar service fee

(R.C. 4503.038)

The act requires the Registrar to adopt rules to fix the deputy registrar service fee at \$5, thus increasing the fee from \$3.50. The fee compensates deputy registrars for performing services such as processing vehicle registrations, driver’s licenses, and other motor-vehicle-related transactions.

Under prior law, enacted by H.B. 62, the transportation budget act, the Registrar was required to adopt rules to fix the deputy registrar fee at a rate between \$3.50 and \$5.25. When establishing the fee, the Registrar was also required to consider inflation and any other relevant factors. Under that prior authority, the Registrar set the fee at \$3.50.

State Fire Marshal CDL exemption

(R.C. 4506.03)

Under continuing law, generally, no person may operate a commercial motor vehicle unless the person has a valid commercial driver’s license or permit. However, there are several exemptions, including qualified persons who operate fire equipment for a fire department, volunteer or nonvolunteer fire company, fire district, or joint fire district.

The act adds the State Fire Marshal to this exemption – that is, a qualified person who operates fire equipment for the State Fire Marshal is not required to hold a commercial driver’s license or permit to operate a commercial motor vehicle.

Salvage certificate of title notary exemption

(R.C. 4505.11)

Generally, when an insurance company (1) comes into possession of a salvage motor vehicle, (2) declares it economically impractical to repair, (3) has paid for the vehicle, and (4) a physical certificate of title was not issued for the vehicle, the insurance company may

⁹² R.C. 4503.44, not in the act.

nonetheless apply for a certificate of title. This application for a certificate of title must be accompanied by a properly executed power of attorney (or other appropriate document) from the motor vehicle owner. Under prior law, all such documents had to be notarized and verified.

The act exempts the accompanying power of attorney (or other appropriate document) from notarization and verification requirements. Under prior law, only the application, and not the accompanying documents, for the salvage certificate of title was so exempt.

A similar notarization and verification exemption for a power of attorney exists in continuing law when (1) to (3) above apply but the insurance company obtains the physical certificate of title.

MARCS Fund

(R.C. 4501.16)

The act eliminates the Multi-Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS) Fund, which had not been used since 2010. It consisted of money the State Highway Patrol received from MARCS users. DPS previously used the fund to provide maintenance for MARCS-related equipment located at both MARCS facilities and tower sites. This maintenance is now conducted by the Department of Administrative Services and is funded through the MARCS Administration Fund.

Ohio Investigative Unit Fund

(R.C. 125.13, 4501.10, and 5502.132, not in the act)

The act eliminates the Public Safety Investigative Unit Salvage and Exchange Fund and redirects money from that fund to the Ohio Investigative Unit Fund. The redirected money comes from money received by the DPS Investigative Unit from the sale of excess motor vehicles and other equipment. Under continuing law, unchanged by the act, the money derived from such sales must be used to purchase replacement motor vehicles and other equipment for the DPS Investigative Unit.

Infrastructure Protection Fund

(R.C. 4737.045)

The act permits DPS to use the funds deposited into the Infrastructure Protection Fund for DPS's operating expenses. DPS also may continue to use the money in the fund for developing and maintaining the Scrap Metal Dealer Registry. Any person who engages in the business of a scrap metal dealer or a bulk merchandise container dealer in Ohio must register annually with the Director of Public Safety to be included in the Registry. An initial registration costs \$200 and a renewal costs \$150. The registration fees – along with any fees paid to recover an impounded vehicle that was used in the theft or illegal transportation of metal, a special purchase article, or bulk merchandise container – are deposited into the Infrastructure Protection Fund.

Reinstatement Fee Debt Reduction and Amnesty Program

(Sections 601.07 and 601.08, amending Section 1 of H.B. 336 of the 132nd G.A.)

The act reinstates the Driver's License Reinstatement Fee Debt Reduction and Amnesty Program. The program was created in 2018, during the 132nd General Assembly, and allows an eligible applicant to either pay a reduced reinstatement fee, or receive a complete waiver of all pending reinstatement fees, to have his or her driver's license reinstated. The program expired on July 31, 2019. It will resume operation on October 17, 2019 (the act's effective date) until December 31, 2019.⁹³

⁹³ See <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/download?key=10202&format=pdf> to learn more about the program.