

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2753

As of March 1, 2002

Title: An act relating to department of licensing agents or subagents.

Brief Description: Modifying department of licensing agent and subagent provisions.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Hatfield, Hankins, Schindler, Cooper, Rockefeller and Edwards).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/4/02.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Dean Carlson (786-7305)

Background: Under current law, when a vehicle is destroyed beyond repair or declared a total loss, the Department of Licensing (DOL) must be notified by the owner or the insurance company, and the title and registration must be surrendered within 15 days of the accident. Upon receiving this notification, DOL must process the surrendered title and update its vehicle records to reflect this information within three working days of receipt.

If wreckers take possession of a destroyed vehicle, they must submit the vehicle information in a written report and attach certificate of ownership documentation within 30 days of acquiring the vehicle. DOL will then process this information and update its vehicle records to reflect the change in title. This takes the department approximately one to five working days.

In dealing with abandoned vehicles, tow truck operators are required to submit an abandoned vehicle report to DOL by mail or fax. Once the department receives the report, it has 72 hours to provide the tow truck operator with vehicle owner information. If DOL cannot locate a vehicle record, it must return the abandoned vehicle report to the tow truck operator and request a vehicle identification number (VIN) inspection be done by law enforcement. If DOL discovers that the vehicle was registered in another jurisdiction, the 72-hour deadline is waived so that a request for owner information can be made and processed by the jurisdiction in which the vehicle was last registered.

Summary of Bill: Subagents and county auditors are authorized to process surrendered vehicle titles and to update DOL vehicle records to reflect this information. The bill also authorizes subagents and county auditors to process abandoned vehicle reports submitted to them by tow truck operators. Under these provisions, if DOL handles these transactions, the department collects a \$3 fee on each transaction; if the county auditor processes these transactions, the auditor collects a \$3 fee on each transaction; if a subagent processes these transactions, the subagent collects a \$3.50 fee on each transaction, and also collects a \$3 fee on behalf of, and to the credit of, the county in which the subagent operates.

Subagents and county auditors are authorized to provide vehicle owner information on abandoned vehicles to registered tow truck operators. This information must be provided within 72 hours of receiving the abandoned vehicle report, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state and federal holidays.

Subagents are granted the same authority county auditors currently have to handle mail-in registrations, which would include the processing of internet registration renewals. The \$3.50 fee currently collected by subagents for processing vehicle registration renewals would also apply to mail and internet-based transactions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2003.