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**Business & Financial Services Committee**

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**HB 1130**

**Brief Description:** Modifying who is authorized to redeem an impounded vehicle.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Hurst and Dahlquist.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Allows an impounded vehicle to be redeemed by an insurer that has received a claim in connection with the insured vehicle and by a vendor working on behalf of an insurer that has received a claim in connection with the insured vehicle.

**Hearing Date:** 1/30/13

**Staff:** Jon Hedegard (786-7127).

**Background:**

Tow truck operators who impound vehicles from private or public property, or tow for law enforcement agencies, are regulated by the Department of Licensing. To be licensed, an applicant must meet financial responsibility standards, provide a list of all employee drivers of a tow truck, pass an inspection by Washington State Patrol, complete the appropriate forms, and pay the appropriate fees.

Impoundment, the taking and holding of a vehicle in legal custody without the consent of the owner, may only be performed by registered tow truck operators. If on public property, the impound is at the direction of a law enforcement officer; if the vehicle is on private property, the impound is at the direction of the property owner or his or her agent.

Once a vehicle is impounded, the impounding tow truck operator is required to notify the legal and registered owners of the vehicle. This notice must be in writing within 24 hours of impoundment and must inform the owner of the identity of the person or agency authorizing the impound. The notification must also include the name of the impounding tow firm, its address, and telephone number.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

An impounded vehicle may only be redeemed by:

- the legal owner;
- the registered owner;
- a person authorized in writing by the registered owner or the vehicle's insurer;
- a person who is determined and verified by the operator to have the permission of the registered owner of the vehicle; or
- a person who has purchased a vehicle from the registered owner who produces proof of ownership or written authorization and signs a receipt.

**Summary of Bill:**

An impounded vehicle may also be redeemed by:

- an insurer that has received a claim in connection with the insured vehicle; and
- a vendor working on behalf of an insurer that has received a claim in connection with the insured vehicle.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.