
Public Safety Committee

HB 1951

Brief Description: Clarifying the authority of local law enforcement agencies to use unmarked vehicles.

Sponsors: Representative Pike.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Clarifies that vehicles used by local peace officers under public authority for special undercover or confidential investigative purposes are not subject to vehicle marking requirements for publicly owned vehicles operating on public highways used in public business.

Hearing Date: 2/10/15

Staff: Cassie Jones (786-7303).

Background:

All publicly owned vehicles used in public business operating on public highways must be marked with the name of the public body and the name of the department which is using the vehicle. The markings must be in a contrasting color, of a certain size, and in a conspicuous place on the right and left sides of the vehicle. This marking requirement does not apply to:

- vehicles operated by a sheriff's office, local police department, or vehicles used by local peace officers under public authority for special undercover or confidential investigative purposes;
- municipal transit vehicles operated for purposes of providing public mass transportation;
- a motorcycle, vehicle over 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight, or other vehicle that for structural reasons cannot be so marked; or
- motor vehicles on loan to a school district for driver training purposes.

Passenger motor vehicles owned or controlled by the State of Washington must be plainly and conspicuously marked on the lower left-hand corner of the rear window with the name of

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operating agency or other identifying labels. This marking requirement does not apply to vehicles used by the Washington State Patrol (WSP) for general undercover or confidential investigative purposes. Traffic control vehicles of the WSP may be exempt from the marking requirement at the discretion of the Chief of the WSP.

Markings must be maintained in a legible condition.

Summary of Bill:

Vehicle marking requirements for publicly owned vehicles used in public business on public highways do not apply to any vehicles used by local peace officers under public authority for special undercover or confidential investigative purposes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 6, 2015.

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