WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 17a ARTICLE 8

WV Legislature

§17A-8-1. Report by police of stolen and recovered vehicles or special mobile equipment.

Every sheriff, chief of police, member of the department of public safety or peace officer upon receiving reliable information that any vehicle registered hereunder or any item of special mobile equipment has been stolen shall immediately report such theft to the department unless prior thereto information has been received of the recovery of such vehicle or item of special mobile equipment. Upon receiving a report of a stolen or embezzled item of special mobile equipment, or the recovery thereof, the department shall immediately report the information to the national crime information center maintained by the federal bureau of investigation. Any said officer upon receiving information that any such vehicle or item of special mobile equipment, which he has previously reported as stolen, has been recovered, shall immediately report the fact of such recovery to the local sheriff's office, police department, or department of public safety and to the department.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-2. Reports by owners or lienors of stolen and recovered vehicles or special mobile equipment.

The owner, or person having a lien or encumbrance upon a registered vehicle or any item of special mobile equipment which has been stolen or embezzled, may notify the department of such theft or embezzlement, but in the event of an embezzlement may make such report only after having procured the issuance of a warrant for the arrest of the person charged with such embezzlement.

Every owner or other person who has given any such notice must notify the department of a recovery of such vehicle or special mobile equipment.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-3. Action by department on report of stolen or embezzled vehicle or special mobile equipment.

The department upon receiving a report of a stolen or embezzled vehicle or any item of special mobile equipment as hereinbefore provided shall file and appropriately index the same and shall, if the same is registered or titled, immediately suspend such registration and/or certificate of title of the vehicle or item of special mobile equipment so reported, and shall not transfer the registration of the same until such time as it is notified in writing that such vehicle or item of special mobile equipment has been recovered.

The department shall at least once each week compile and maintain at its headquarters office a list of all vehicles or items of special mobile equipment which have been stolen or embezzled or recovered as reported to it during the preceding week and such list shall be open to inspection by any peace officer or other person interested in any such vehicle or item of special mobile equipment. A copy of each such weekly list shall be forwarded to the superintendent of the department of public safety.

The department shall publish once a month a list of all vehicles or items of special mobile equipment stolen, embezzled or recovered during the previous month and shall forward a copy of the same to every sheriff and to all police departments in cities of this state with over five thousand inhabitants. Such list shall also be forwarded to the State Police department or other proper official in each state of the United States.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-4. Unlawful taking of vehicle.

(a) Any person who drives a vehicle, not his or her own, without consent of the owner thereof, and with intent temporarily to deprive said owner of his or her possession of such vehicle, without intent to steal the same, is guilty of a misdemeanor. The consent of the owner of a vehicle to its taking or driving shall not in any case be presumed or implied because of such owner's consent on a previous occasion to the taking or driving of such vehicle by the same or a different person. Any person who assists in, or is a party or accessory to or an accomplice in any such unauthorized taking or driving, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

(b) Any person violating the provisions of this section is, for the first offense, guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than $500, or confined in the county or regional jail not more than six months, or both; for the second offense, is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than $3,000, or imprisoned in a state correctional facility for not less than one nor more than three years, or imprisoned in a regional jail for not more than one year, or both fined and imprisoned; for third or subsequent offenses, is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than $5,000, or imprisoned in a state correctional facility for not less than one nor more than three years or both.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-5. Receiving or transferring stolen vehicle.

Any person who, with intent to procure or pass title to a vehicle which he knows or has reason to believe has been stolen or unlawfully taken, receives, or transfers possession of the same from or to another, or who has in his possession any vehicle which he knows or has reason to believe has been stolen or unlawfully taken, and who is not an officer of the law engaged at the time in the performance of his duty as such officer, is guilty of a felony.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-6. Injuring or tampering with vehicle or special mobile equipment.

(a) Any person who either individually or in association with one or more persons willfully injures or tampers with any vehicle or breaks or removes any part or parts of or from a vehicle without the consent of the owner is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Any person who with intent to commit any malicious mischief, injury, or other crime climbs into or upon a vehicle whether it is in motion or at rest or with like intent attempts to manipulate any of the levers, starting mechanism, brakes, or other mechanism or device of a vehicle while the same is at rest and unattended or with like intent sets in motion any vehicle while the same is at rest and unattended is guilty of a misdemeanor.

(b) Any person, either individually or in association with one or more persons, who shall willfully injure or damage any item of special mobile equipment or break or remove any parts from an item of special mobile equipment, without the consent of the owner, which injury, damage, or breakage or removal of parts shall be of an amount of $1,000 or more, is guilty of a felony. If the injury, damage, or breakage or removal of parts shall be of an amount which is less than $1,000, such person is guilty of a misdemeanor.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-7. Motor vehicle or special mobile equipment without manufacturer's serial number, motor or engine number or other distinguishing number or identification mark; offenses.

(a) A person who knowingly buys, receives, disposes of, sells, offers for sale, conceals, transports, causes to be transported, or possesses a motor vehicle, or a motor or engine removed from a motor vehicle, from which the manufacturer's serial number, motor or engine number or other distinguishing number or identification mark has been removed, defaced, covered, altered or destroyed for the purpose of concealing or misrepresenting the identity of the motor vehicle or part thereof, is guilty of a felony.

(b) A person who knowingly buys, receives, disposes of, sells, offers for sale, conceals, transports, causes to be transported, or possesses special mobile equipment or special mobile equipment tires from which the manufacturer's serial number, motor or engine number or other distinguishing number or identification mark has been removed, defaced, covered, altered or destroyed, is guilty of a felony.

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§17A-8-8. Altering or changing a manufacturer's serial number, motor or engine number or other distinguishing number or identification mark; offenses.

(a) A person who, with fraudulent intent, removes, defaces, covers, alters or destroys the manufacturer's serial number, motor or engine number or other distinguishing number or identification mark of a motor vehicle or who places or stamps an actual or facsimile manufacturer's serial number, motor or engine number or other distinguishing number or identification mark upon a motor vehicle, except one assigned thereto by the department, is guilty of a felony.

This section shall not prohibit the restoration by an owner of an original manufacturer's serial number, motor or engine number or other distinguishing number or identification mark when such restoration is made under permit issued by the department, nor prevent any manufacturer from placing numbers or marks upon motor vehicles or parts thereof in the ordinary course of business.

(b) A person who removes, defaces, covers, alters or destroys, or causes to be removed, defaced, covered, altered or destroyed, the manufacturer's serial number, motor or engine number or other distinguishing number or identification mark on special mobile equipment or special mobile equipment tires, the property of another, for any reason, is guilty of a felony.

(c) The term "manufacturer's serial number, motor or engine number or other distinguishing number or identification mark", as used in this section and section seven of this article, means a unique number or mark placed on a vehicle or part thereof by the manufacturer so as to identify it particularly and distinguish the vehicle or part from all other such vehicles or parts.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-9. Theft of a rental vehicle; penalty.

(a) A person is guilty of theft of a rental vehicle when:

(1) Such person, under the terms of a written rental or lease agreement, obtains a motor vehicle and, in so doing, makes a false or fraudulent representation or utilizes a false pretense or personation, trick, artifice or device; and

(2) Such person thereafter possesses such motor vehicle with the intent to permanently deprive the owner of such motor vehicle of his property.

(b) Any person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a felony, and, upon conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned in the penitentiary not less than one nor more than two years, or, in the discretion of the court, be confined in the county jail not more than one year and shall be fined not more than $500.

(c) For purposes of this section, the making of a false or fraudulent representation or the utilization of a false pretense or personation, trick, artifice or device shall include, but not be limited to, a false representation as to name, residence, employment, or operator's license.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-10. Unlawful retention of rented or leased vehicle after notice.

Any person who, after renting or leasing a motor vehicle under an agreement in writing which provides for the return of said vehicle to a particular place at a particular time, shall fail to return the vehicle to said place within the time specified, and is thereafter served with a written notice, or upon whom oral demand is thereafter personally made, to return said vehicle to the place specified in the written agreement within seventy-two hours from the time of the service of notice or personal communication of such demand, and who fails to return said vehicle to the lessor within said period, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be confined in jail for a period of not more than one year or be fined not more than $500 or both. The notice hereinabove provided for may be served in the same manner that any other notice may now be served under existing statutes.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-11. Unlawful acts relating to certificates of title, blank certificates of title and blank registration forms; penalty.

Any person who obtains unlawfully or who steals any certificate of title, blank certificate of title or blank registration form, or any person who knowingly buys, receives, disposes of, sells, offers for sale, or has in his possession any of the above which such person knows or has reason to know has been obtained unlawfully or stolen shall be guilty of a felony, and, upon conviction thereof, shall be confined in the penitentiary not less than one year nor more than ten years.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-12. Recovery of special mobile equipment; chain of custody; sale of unclaimed special mobile equipment; penalties.

(a) When an item of special mobile equipment has been lawfully seized and remains in the custody of the law- enforcement authority having seized it, if at any time the true owner thereof shall appear and prove to the satisfaction of such law-enforcement authority his ownership of and entitlement to such item of special mobile equipment, it may be returned to such owner subject to its being made available for use in any criminal prosecution under this article.

(b) The law-enforcement authority shall take reasonable steps to locate the owner, including, but not limited to, notifying local equipment dealer, notifying equipment manufacturer and placing legal advertisements detailing confiscated equipment in newspapers. The law-enforcement authority shall take reasonable precautions to protect the equipment. The owner of the special mobile equipment shall pay the costs incurred by the law-enforcement authority for advertising, transporting and storing such special mobile equipment.

(c) If, after six months, no person has appeared and proved he is the true owner of an item of special mobile equipment seized under this article and prosecution has been instituted, the court in which such prosecution has been instituted may sell said item of special mobile equipment under such terms as are commercially reasonable: Provided, That notice of sale shall be published as a Class I legal advertisement in compliance with the provisions of article three, chapter fifty-nine of this code, and the publication area shall be the county in which such prosecution was initially instituted. The proceeds of such sale shall be applied, first, to the payment of any expenses incurred in taking possession, storing and selling such special mobile equipment; and the balance, if any, shall be paid over to the general receiver of the court in the county in which the prosecution was instituted for its application to that county's general revenues.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of article eleven of this chapter, any person convicted of a felony under the provisions of subsection (b), section six, subsection (b), section seven or subsection (b), section eight of this article shall be confined in the penitentiary not less than one nor more than ten years and fined not more than $500, or, in the discretion of the court, be confined in the county jail for not more than one year and be fined not more than $500.

Notwithstanding the provisions of article eleven of this chapter, any person convicted of a misdemeanor under the provisions of subsection (b), section six of this article shall be confined in the county jail for a term not to exceed one year or fined not more than $500, or both.

WV Legislature

§17A-8-13. Theft of a motor vehicle offered for sale which had been obtained for temporary use for demonstration purposes; penalty.

(a) A person is guilty of theft of a motor vehicle when:

(1) Such person, under the terms of an oral agreement, obtains, for demonstration purposes, the temporary use of a motor vehicle offered for sale and, in so doing, makes a false or fraudulent representation or utilizes a false pretense or personation, trick, artifice or device; and

(2) Such person thereafter possesses such motor vehicle with the intent to permanently deprive the owner of such motor vehicle of his property.

(b) Any person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a felony, and, upon conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned in the penitentiary not less than one nor more than ten years, or, in the discretion of the court, be confined in the county jail not more than one year and shall be fined not more than $500.

(c) For purposes of this section, the making of a false or fraudulent representation or the utilization of a false pretense or personation, trick, artifice or device shall include, but not be limited to, a false representation as to name, residence, employment, or operator's license.

WV Legislature