WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 17c ARTICLE 16

WV Legislature

§17C-16-1. Vehicles not to operate without required equipment or in unsafe condition.

No person shall drive or move on any highway any motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, or pole trailer, or any combination thereof unless the equipment upon any and every said vehicle is in good working order and adjustment as required in this chapter and said vehicle is in such safe mechanical condition as not to endanger the driver or other occupant or any person upon any highway.

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§17C-16-2. Inspection by department of public safety.

(a) The department of public safety may at any time upon reasonable cause to believe that a vehicle is unsafe or not equipped as required by law, or that its equipment is not in proper adjustment or repair, require the driver of such vehicle to stop and submit such vehicle to an inspection and such test with reference thereto as may be appropriate.

(b) In the event such vehicle and its equipment are found to be in safe condition and in full compliance with the law, the officer making such inspection shall issue to the driver an official certificate of inspection and approval of such vehicle specifying those parts or equipment so inspected and approved.

(c) In the event such vehicle is found to be in unsafe condition or any required part or equipment is not present or is not in proper repair and adjustment the officer shall give a written notice to the driver and shall send a copy to the department. Said notice shall require that such vehicle be placed in safe condition and its equipment in proper repair and adjustment specifying the particulars with reference thereto and that a certificate of inspection and approval be obtained within five days.

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§17C-16-3. Owners and drivers to comply with inspection laws.

(a) No person driving a vehicle shall refuse to submit such vehicle to an inspection and test when required to do so by the department of public safety.

(b) Every owner or driver, upon receiving a notice as provided in section two of this article shall comply therewith and shall within five days secure an official certificate of inspection and approval which shall be issued in duplicate, one copy to be retained by the owner or driver and the other copy to be forwarded to the department. In lieu of compliance with this paragraph the vehicle shall not be operated, except as provided in the next succeeding paragraph.

(c) No person shall operate any vehicle after receiving a notice with reference thereto as above provided, except as may be necessary to return such vehicle to the residence or place of business of the owner or driver, or to a garage, until said vehicle and its equipment has been placed in proper repair and adjustment and otherwise made to conform to the requirements of this chapter and a certificate of inspection and approval shall be obtained as promptly as possible thereafter.

(d) In the event repair or adjustment of any vehicle or its equipment is found necessary upon inspection, the owner of said vehicle may obtain such repair or adjustment at any place he may choose, but in every event an official certificate of inspection and approval must be obtained, otherwise such vehicle shall not be operated upon the highways of this state.

(e) "Inspection and test," as used in this article, shall mean inspections and tests as related to the actual mechanical and operating ability of such vehicle.

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§17C-16-4. Superintendent of the West Virginia State Police to require periodic inspection; acceptance of certificate of inspection from another state; suspension of registration of unsafe vehicles.

(a) The Superintendent of the West Virginia State Police shall require that every motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer registered in this state be inspected once every two years; and that an official certificate of inspection and approval be obtained for each vehicle: *Provided*, That commercial motor vehicles which are subject to the federal motor carrier safety administration rules and regulations should be inspected at least once annually to meet the requirements of federal motor carrier safety regulations which require a commercial motor vehicle registered in this state to pass an annual inspection of all safety equipment. The inspections shall be made and the certificates obtained with respect to the mechanism, brakes, and equipment of every vehicle designated by the superintendent.

The superintendent may make necessary rules for the administration and enforcement of this section and may designate any period or periods during which owners of any vehicles, subject to this section, shall display upon the vehicles certificates of inspection and approval or shall produce the certificates upon demand of any officer or employee of the State Police designated by the superintendent or any police or peace officer when authorized by the superintendent.

(b) The superintendent may authorize the acceptance in this state of a certificate of inspection and approval issued in another state having an inspection law similar to this chapter and may extend the time within which the resident owner of a vehicle which was not in this state during the time an inspection was required must obtain a certificate.

(c) At the request of the superintendent, the Commissioner of the Division of Motor Vehicles may suspend the registration of any vehicle which the superintendent determines is in such an unsafe condition that it constitutes a menace to safety, or which after notice and demand is not equipped as required in this chapter, or for which the vehicle's owner has not obtained the required certificate.

(d) If requested by the owner of the vehicle, the superintendent shall also cause to be inspected a Class A farm use motor vehicle exempt from annual registration certificate and licensing as provided in §17A-3-2 of this code. If the Class A farm use motor vehicle passes the inspection, the superintendent shall cause a certificate of inspection to be issued for that vehicle.

(e) (1) If requested by the owner of the vehicle, the superintendent shall also cause to be inspected on an annual basis any commercial motor vehicle which is subject to the federal motor carrier safety administration rules and regulations. If the commercial motor vehicle passes the inspection, the superintendent shall cause a certificate of inspection to be issued for that vehicle and the validity period of that inspection will be for one year, expiring at the end of the month one year after the inspection: *Provided*, That, notwithstanding the provisions of §17C-16-5, a charge of $3 per sticker shall be charged to the inspection station,

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and the funds received shall be deposited in the State Treasury and credited to the account of the State Police for application in the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this article and for the purchase of vehicles, equipment for vehicles, and maintenance of vehicles. For inspections provided pursuant to this subsection, the total charge, including the cost of the sticker, shall not exceed $14.

(2) For purposes of this section, "Commercial motor vehicle" is defined as any vehicle registered in this state used on a highway, in interstate commerce, that: (1) has a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) or gross combination weight rating (GCWR), or gross vehicle weight (GVW) or gross combination weight (GCW) of 10,001 pounds or more, whichever is greater; (2) is designed to transport more than eight (8) passengers (including the driver) for compensation; (3) is designed to transport 16 or more people, including the driver, and is not used to transport passengers for compensation; or, (4) is transporting hazardous materials in quantities requiring the vehicle to be placarded.

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§17C-16-5. Permit for official inspection stations; fees for and certificate of inspection.

(a) The Superintendent of the State Police is responsible for the inspection as provided in this article and shall prescribe requirements and qualifications for official inspection stations. He or she shall select and designate the stations and shall issue permits for official inspection stations and furnish instructions and all necessary forms for the inspection of vehicles as required in this article and the issuance of official certificates of inspection and approval. The certificate of inspection shall be a paper sticker or decal to be affixed to the windshield of a motor vehicle, shall be serially numbered, and shall properly identify the official inspection station which issued it. A charge of $6 per sticker shall be charged by the State Police to the inspection station, and the funds received shall be deposited into the State Treasury and credited to the account of the State Police for application in the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this article and for the purchase of vehicles, equipment for vehicles, and maintenance of vehicles. The superintendent may exchange stickers or make refunds to official inspection stations for stickers on hand when permits are revoked or when, for any reason, the stickers become obsolete. The amendments made to this subsection during the 2023 regular session of the Legislature shall become effective on January 1, 2024.

(b) A person shall apply for a permit upon an official form prescribed by the superintendent and the superintendent shall grant permits only when the superintendent is satisfied that the station is properly equipped, has competent personnel to make the inspections and adjustments, and that the inspections and adjustments will be properly conducted. The superintendent, before issuing a permit, may require the applicant to file a bond with surety approved by the superintendent, conditioned that such applicant, as a station operator, will make compensation for any damage to a vehicle during an inspection or adjustment due to negligence on the part of the station operator or employees thereof.

(c) The superintendent shall properly supervise and cause inspections to be made of the stations. Upon finding that a station is not properly equipped or conducted, the superintendent may, upon a first violation, suspend the permit for a period of up to one year. Upon a second or subsequent finding that a station is not properly equipped or conducted, the superintendent shall permanently revoke and require the surrender of the permit. The superintendent may reinstate the permit of any person whose permit was permanently revoked prior to the effective date of this section upon a first finding that a station was not properly equipped or conducted, upon application, at any time after the expiration of six months from the time of revocation and shall reinstate the permit, upon application, after the expiration of one year. He or she shall maintain and post at his or her office and at any other places as he or she may select lists of all stations holding permits and of those whose permits have been suspended or revoked.

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§17C-16-6. Assignment, transfer, and posting of official inspection station permit; issuance and record of certificate of inspection; inspection fee.

(a) No permit for an official inspection station shall be assigned or transferred or used at any location other than designated in the permit and every permit shall be posted in a conspicuous place at the station location designated in the permit.

(b) The person operating the station shall issue a certificate of inspection and approval, upon an official form, to the owner of a vehicle upon inspecting the vehicle and determining that its equipment required under this article is in good condition and proper adjustment, but otherwise no certificate shall be issued, except one issued pursuant to section two of this article. When required by the superintendent, a record and report shall be made of every inspection and every certificate issued.

(c) A fee of not more than $19 may be charged for an inspection and any necessary headlight adjustment to proper focus, not including any replacement parts required, and the issuance of the certificate, but the imposition of the charge is not mandatory. The amendments made to this subsection during the 2023 regular session of the Legislature shall become effective on January 1, 2024.

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§17C-16-7. Improper representation as official stations.

(a) No person shall in any manner represent any place as an official inspection station unless such station is operating under a valid permit issued by the department.

(b) No person shall issue a certificate of inspection and approval unless then holding a valid permit hereunder.

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§17C-16-8. False certificates.

(a) No person shall make, issue, or knowingly use any imitation or counterfeit of an official certificate of inspection.

(b) No person shall display or cause or permit to be displayed upon a vehicle any certificate of inspection and approval knowing the same to be fictitious or issued for another vehicle or issued without an inspection having been made.

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§17C-16-9. Operation without certificate or failure to produce certificate; penalty for misdemeanor.

It is a misdemeanor for any owner or operator, or both owner and operator, of any vehicle required to be inspected under subsection (a), section four of this article, to operate or permit to be operated such vehicle without having displayed thereon a current and valid certificate of inspection and approval or fail to produce same upon demand of any authorized person as designated under said subsection: Provided, That a dealer licensed to sell new vehicles under the provision of article six, chapter seventeen-a of this code shall not be required to display a certificate of inspection and approval upon any new vehicle if the vehicle is driven for an operational purpose including all activities associated with dealer preparation for sale of a motor vehicle belonging to such dealer when such vehicle has not been titled or delivered to a purchaser, and when such car is not to be used in the demonstrator fleet or otherwise routinely driven on the highways or roads of this state.

Unless another penalty is by the laws of this state provided, every person convicted of a misdemeanor for operating a vehicle without having displayed thereon a current and valid certificate of inspection and approval or for failure to produce such certificate upon demand of an authorized person shall be punished by a fine of not more than $100: Provided, That any person who obtains an inspection and a current and valid certificate of inspection and who, within five days of the issuance of a citation for a violation of the provisions of this section, provides a receipt of inspection to and makes the vehicle so operated available for examination by a court of competent jurisdiction, shall not be guilty of a violation of the provisions of this section: Provided, however, That the misdemeanor penalty shall be imposed if the certificate of inspection has not been valid for a period exceeding three months prior to the date of the issuance of a citation.

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