§351. Registration required

The owner of a vehicle that is operated or remains on a public way is responsible for registering the vehicle. [PL 1999, c. 68, §1 (NEW).]

1. Failure to register. A person who operates a vehicle that is not registered in accordance with this Title, fails to register a vehicle or permits a vehicle that is not registered to remain on a public way commits:

A. A traffic infraction for which a fine of not more than $50 may be adjudged for a first offense if the vehicle was registered and the registration has been expired for more than 30 days but less than 150 days; [PL 2021, c. 427, §1 (AMD); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

B. [PL 2021, c. 427, §1 (RP); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

C. A traffic infraction for which a fine of not more than $100 may be adjudged for a first offense if the vehicle was registered and the registration has been expired for 150 days or more; [PL 2021, c. 427, §1 (NEW); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

D. A traffic infraction for which a fine of not more than $500 may be adjudged for each subsequent offense; or [PL 2021, c. 427, §1 (NEW); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

E. A Class E crime if the vehicle has never been registered by the current owner of the vehicle. [PL 2021, c. 427, §1 (NEW); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

A person served with a Violation Summons and Complaint charging a violation of this subsection may have the complaint dismissed if that person shows satisfactory evidence of registration that was in effect at the time of the alleged violation or that the person subsequently registered the vehicle prior to the date required for filing an answer to the complaint. The clerk of the District Court Violations Bureau must dismiss the complaint if, prior to the date required for filing an answer to the complaint, the person charged files a copy of the Violation Summons and Complaint with the bureau, together with satisfactory evidence of registration. If a person files a timely answer to a Violation Summons and Complaint alleging a violation of this subsection and that person presents to the court at the time of trial satisfactory evidence of registration, the court must dismiss the complaint.
[PL 2021, c. 427, §1 (AMD); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

1-A. Residents required to register. An owner of a vehicle who becomes a resident of this State shall register that vehicle in this State within 30 days of establishing residency. A person who operates or allows a vehicle that is not registered in accordance with this subsection to remain on a public way commits:

A. A traffic infraction for which a fine of not more than $50 may be adjudged for a first offense if more than 30 days but less than 150 days has elapsed since establishing residency; [PL 2021, c. 427, §2 (AMD); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

A-1. A traffic infraction for which a fine of not more than $500 may be adjudged for a 2nd and each subsequent offense; or [PL 2021, c. 427, §2 (NEW); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

B. A Class E crime if more than 150 days have elapsed since establishing residency. [PL 2005, c. 433, §5 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 433, §28 (AFF).]
[PL 2021, c. 427, §2 (AMD); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

2. Operating a vehicle with an expired registration. The owner or operator of a vehicle stopped by a law enforcement officer and having a registration that has expired within the last 30 days must be issued a warning, rather than a summons, in a form designated by the Chief of the State Police. This warning must state that:

A. Within 10 business days, the owner or operator must register the vehicle; [PL 2021, c. 427, §3 (AMD); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

B. The renewed registration expires on the same month as the previous registration; and [PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

C. The registration fee is the same as for a full year's registration. [PL 1999, c. 68, §1 (AMD).]
[PL 2021, c. 427, §3 (AMD); PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF).]

3. Temporary permit to tow unregistered vehicle. A law enforcement officer, an employee of a municipal police department designated by the chief, an employee of the sheriff's department designated by the sheriff, an employee of the State Police designated by the Chief of the State Police or an employee of the bureau designated by the Secretary of State may issue a permit in writing to allow:

A. An unregistered motor vehicle to be towed either by a regular service wrecker or by the use of a towbar or tow dolly; or [PL 2001, c. 360, §3 (AMD).]

B. [PL 1995, c. 247, §1 (RP).]

C. An unregistered trailer or semitrailer with a gross weight of 3,000 pounds or less to be towed, for one trip only, between the points of origin and destination. [PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

A permit issued under this subsection is valid for no more than 3 days, including the date of issuance.
[PL 2001, c. 360, §3 (AMD).]

3-A. Permit to operate unregistered vehicle. Upon stopping a vehicle with a registration that has been expired for more than 30 days, a law enforcement officer may issue a permit to the owner or operator of the vehicle to operate the vehicle to the owner's residence or to an office of the bureau for the sole purpose of renewal of the registration by the owner.
[PL 1995, c. 247, §2 (NEW).]

4. Duplicate registration, notification of change in location or status. Duplicate registrations are provided in accordance with section 1405. A person to whom a registration has been issued must notify the Secretary of State of a change in location or status in accordance with section 1407.
[PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

5. Expiration of 30-day temporary registration plate. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, a person who operates a vehicle with an expired temporary registration plate issued pursuant to section 954-A commits:

A. A traffic infraction for which a fine of not more than $50 may be adjudged if the registration has been expired for less than 150 days; or [PL 2023, c. 257, §5 (AMD).]

B. A Class E crime if the registration has been expired for 150 days or more. [PL 2001, c. 671, §4 (NEW).]
[PL 2023, c. 257, §5 (AMD).]

6. Improper registration. A traffic infraction for which a fine of not less than $200 nor more than $1,000 may be adjudged if the vehicle is not properly registered. For purposes of this subsection, "not properly registered" means the vehicle is either registered in a manner that is not reflective of its current actual use or as a type of vehicle that it is not as a matter of law, including, but not limited to, a motor vehicle registered as an antique auto when the vehicle is not an antique auto as defined in section 101, subsection 3.
[PL 2013, c. 112, §7 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 683, §A2 (NEW). PL 1993, c. 683, §B5 (AFF). PL 1995, c. 247, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 454, §2 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 584, §B4 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 41, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 68, §1 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 360, §3 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 361, §5 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 671, §§3,4

(AMD). PL 2005, c. 433, §5 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 433, §28 (AFF). PL 2013, c. 112, §§6, 7 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 427, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 427, §4 (AFF). PL 2023, c. 257, §5 (AMD).

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