



SB-247 Charter bus transportation: safety improvements. (2015-2016)

SECTION 1. *The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:*

(a) The safety of passengers traveling in charter buses in California is of the utmost importance. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, between 1975 and 2013, there were over 11,000 fatal crashes involving charter buses, including 1,615 occupant fatalities. Improved safety standards and practices are necessary to better protect passengers in the event of a charter bus crash.

(b) On April 10, 2014, in Orland, California, eight passengers traveling on a charter bus, along with the driver, were tragically killed in a freeway collision. In a report released in 2015, the National Transportation Safety Board examined the crash and made recommendations for safety improvements, including fire performance standards for interior materials, requiring pretrip safety briefings for passengers, improvements in vehicle design to facilitate evacuation, and the installation of event data recorder (EDR) technology for crash reconstruction and safety improvements.

(c) These improvements would significantly increase passenger safety and would reduce or prevent future deaths in traffic collisions involving charter buses.

SEC. 2. *Article 3.6 (commencing with Section 27425) is added to Chapter 5 of Division 12 of the Vehicle Code, to read:*

Article 3.6. Charter-Party Carrier Safety Equipment

27425. *(a) A vehicle described in paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 5363 of the Public Utilities Code that is designed to carry 39 or more passengers and that is manufactured on or after July 1, 2020, shall be equipped with emergency lighting fixtures that will turn on in the event of an impact or collision.*

(b) A vehicle as specified in subdivision (a) shall at all times meet applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS) issued by the United States Department of Transportation. This section shall not be construed to conflict with those standards.

27426. *No later than July 1, 2018, the department shall adopt standards and criteria for the implementation of the safety equipment requirements specified in Section 27425.*

27427. *This act does not alter or affect the requirements of the Passenger Charter-party Carriers' Act (Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 5351) of Division 2 of the Public Utilities Code).*

SEC. 3. *Section 34505.8 is added to the Vehicle Code, to read:*

34505.8. *(a) A charter-party carrier of passengers engaged in charter bus transportation shall ensure that the driver of a vehicle as described in paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 5363 of the Public Utilities Code that is designed to carry 39 or more passengers shall instruct or play a video for all passengers on the safety equipment and emergency exits on the vehicle prior to the beginning of any trip and provide each passenger with written or video instructions that include, at a minimum, a demonstration of the location and operation of all exits, including emergency exits, and the importance of wearing a seatbelt, if available.*

(b) Notwithstanding any other law, no later than July 1, 2018, the department shall adopt standards and criteria for the implementation of the safety requirements specified in this section.

(c) This section does not alter or affect the requirements of the Passenger Charter-party Carriers' Act (Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 5351) of Division 2 of the Public Utilities Code).

SEC. 4. *No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.*