

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2026 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

**House Bill 4349**

**FISCAL  
NOTE**

By Delegate Burkhammer

[Introduced January 15, 2026; referred to the  
Committee on Government Organization then  
Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §17A-3-2 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating  
2 to renewal of registration; and providing motor vehicle registrations and license plates free  
3 of charge to volunteer firefighters who have at least five years of service.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 3. ORIGINAL AND RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION; ISSUANCE OF  
CERTIFICATES OF TITLE.**

**§17A-3-2. Every motor vehicle, etc., subject to registration and certificate of title  
provisions; exceptions.**

1 (a) Every motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, pole trailer, and recreational vehicle when  
2 driven or moved upon a highway is subject to the registration and certificate of title provisions of  
3 this chapter except:

4 (1) Any vehicle driven or moved upon a highway in conformance with the provisions of this  
5 chapter relating to manufacturers, transporters, dealers, lienholders, or nonresidents or under a  
6 temporary registration permit issued by the division as authorized under this chapter;

7 (2) Any implement of husbandry upon which is securely attached a machine for spraying  
8 fruit trees and plants of the owner or lessee or for any other implement of husbandry which is used  
9 exclusively for agricultural or horticultural purposes on lands owned or leased by the owner of the  
10 implement and which is not operated on or over any public highway of this state for any other  
11 purpose other than for the purpose of operating it across a highway or along a highway other than  
12 an expressway as designated by the Commissioner of the Division of Highways from one point of  
13 the owner's land to another part of the owner's land, irrespective of whether or not the tracts adjoin:

14 *Provided*, That the distance between the points may not exceed 35 miles, or for the purpose of  
15 taking it or other fixtures attached to the implement, to and from a repair shop for repairs. The  
16 exemption in this subdivision from registration and license requirements also applies to any  
17 vehicle described in this subsection or to any farm trailer owned by the owner or lessee of the farm

18 on which the trailer is used, when the trailer is used by the owner of the trailer for the purpose of  
19 moving farm produce and livestock from the farm along a public highway for a distance not to  
20 exceed 35 miles to a storage house or packing plant, when the use is a seasonal operation:

21 (A) The exemptions contained in this section also apply to farm machinery, tractors, and  
22 mini-trucks: *Provided*, That the machinery, tractors, and mini-trucks may use the highways in  
23 going from one tract of land to another tract of land regardless of whether the land is owned by the  
24 same or different persons. For the purposes of this section, "mini-truck" means a foreign-  
25 manufactured import or domestic-manufactured vehicle designed primarily for off-road use and  
26 powered by an engine ranging in size from 550cc to 660cc and weighing approximately 1,800  
27 pounds;

28 (B) Any vehicle exempted under this subsection from the requirements of annual  
29 registration certificate and license plates and fees for the registration certificate and license plate  
30 may not use the highways between sunset and sunrise unless the vehicle is classified as a Class  
31 A motor vehicle with a farm-use exemption under the provisions of §17A-10-1 of this code and has  
32 a valid and current inspection sticker as required by the provisions of §17C-16-1 *et seq.* of this  
33 code and is traveling from one tract of land to another over a distance of 35 miles or less;

34 (C) Any vehicle exempted under this section from the requirements of annual registration  
35 certificate and license plates may use the highways as provided in this section whether the exempt  
36 vehicle is self-propelled, towed by another exempt vehicle or towed by another vehicle required to  
37 be registered;

38 (D) Any vehicle used as an implement of husbandry exempt under this section shall have  
39 the words "farm use" in at least 10-inch letters affixed to both sides or to both front and back of the  
40 implement or in at least 2-inch letters on license plates affixed to both front and back of the  
41 implement. Any vehicle which would be subject to registration as a Class A or B vehicle if not  
42 exempted by this section shall display a farm-use exemption certificate on the lower driver's side  
43 of the windshield:

44 (i) The farm-use exemption certificate shall be provided by the commissioner and shall be  
45 issued annually by the assessor of the applicant's county of residence. The assessor shall issue a  
46 farm-use exemption certificate to the applicant upon his or her determination pursuant to an  
47 examination of the property books or documentation provided by the applicant that the vehicle has  
48 been properly assessed as Class I personal property. Nothing in this section or any rule  
49 promulgated under the authority of chapter 29A of this code may be construed to require any  
50 applicant for a renewal of a farm use exemption certificate to appear personally before any  
51 assessor. The assessor shall charge a fee of \$2 for each certificate, which shall be retained by the  
52 assessor;

53 (ii) A farm-use exemption certificate shall not exempt the applicant from maintaining the  
54 security required by §17D-1-1 *et seq.* of this code on any vehicle being operated on the roads or  
55 highways of this state;

56 (iii) No person charged with the offense of operating a vehicle without a farm-use  
57 exemption certificate, if required under this section, may be convicted of the offense if he or she  
58 produces in court, or in the office of the arresting officer, a valid farm-use exemption certificate for  
59 the vehicle in question within five days;

60 (3) Any vehicle which is propelled exclusively by electric power obtained from overhead  
61 trolley wires though not operated upon rails:

62 (4) Any vehicle of a type subject to registration which is owned by the government of the  
63 United States:

64 (5) Any wrecked or disabled vehicle towed by a licensed wrecker or dealer on the public  
65 highways of this state:

66 (6) The following recreational vehicles are exempt from the requirements of annual  
67 registration, license plates and fees, unless otherwise specified by law, but are subject to the  
68 certificate of title provisions of this chapter regardless of highway use: Motorboats, all-terrain  
69 vehicles, utility terrain vehicles, and snowmobiles; and

70 (7) Any special mobile equipment as defined in §17A-1-1(r) of this code.

71 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section:

72 (1) Mobile homes or manufactured homes are exempt from the requirements of annual

73 registration, license plates and fees;

74 (2) House trailers may be registered and licensed; and

75 (3) Factory-built homes are subject to the certificate of title provisions of this chapter.

76 (c) The division shall title and register low-speed vehicles if the manufacturer's certificate of

77 origin clearly identifies the vehicle as a low-speed vehicle. The division may not title or register

78 homemade low-speed vehicles or retrofitted golf carts and such vehicles do not qualify as low-

79 speed vehicles in this state. In addition to all other motor vehicle laws and regulations, except as

80 specifically exempted below, low-speed vehicles are subject to the following restrictions and

81 requirements:

82 (1) Low-speed vehicles shall only be operated on private roads and on public roads and

83 streets within the corporate limits of a municipality where the speed limit is not more than 25 miles

84 per hour;

85 (2) Notwithstanding any provisions in this code to the contrary, low-speed vehicles shall

86 meet the requirements of 49 C.F.R. §571.500 (2003);

87 (3) In lieu of periodic inspection, the owner of a low-speed vehicle shall, upon initial

88 application for registration and each renewal thereafter, certify under penalty of false swearing,

89 that all lights, brakes, tires, and seat belts are in good working condition; and

90 (4) Any person operating a low-speed vehicle must hold a valid driver's license, not an

91 instruction permit.

92 (d) License plate and vehicle registration fees otherwise charged in this section are hereby

93 waived for volunteer firefighters for one personal vehicle: *Provided*, That a firefighter shall only be

94 eligible after he or she has accrued five years of service. Eligible firefighters shall present an

95 affidavit from his or her chief confirming their participation for five years or more, and annually

96 thereafter. This section does not apply to commercial vehicles owned or operated by the volunteer

97 firefighter.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to permit volunteer firefighters with five or more years of service to be eligible for free vehicle registrations and license plates on their personal vehicle.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.