

HB 500 -- Motor Vehicles

Sponsor: Colona

This bill changes the laws regarding motor vehicle financial responsibility and nonconsensual towing of a motor vehicle.

MOTORIST INSURANCE IDENTIFICATION DATABASE PROGRAM

The Motorist Insurance Identification Database Program is re-established which requires the State Highway Patrol to establish and administer a database in coordination with the Department of Revenue to verify compliance with motor vehicle financial responsibility requirements using an online instant verification.

Effective July 1, 2012, a motor vehicle owner will be required to pay a \$1 annual fee or a \$2 biennial fee on each vehicle registration to be deposited into the Motorist Insurance Database Account for the purpose of administering and enforcing the program. The patrol must contract with a designated agent who will develop and maintain a computer database with its own computer network by June 30, 2012, using guidelines established by the patrol in consultation with the department and information provided by the department and insurers.

If the database indicates a registered motor vehicle has failed to maintain the required financial responsibility for three consecutive months, the department will suspend the owner's vehicle registration.

The bill specifies the information required to be given beginning July 1, 2012, and the frequency of reporting by licensed insurance companies to the designated agent. The Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration will assess a fine of up to \$1,000 per day for noncompliance by an insurer.

The patrol must review the operation and performance of the program to determine whether the number of uninsured motorists has declined during the first three years following the implementation and must submit a report of its findings to the General Assembly no later than January 15 of the year following the third complete year of implementation.

The bill establishes the notification and appeals process, the period of suspension, and reinstatement requirements.

NONCONSENSUAL TOWING OF A MOTOR VEHICLE

Beginning July 1, 2012, any towing company performing a nonconsensual tow of a motor vehicle must within 45 minutes of completing the tow notify and provide the designated agent with certain specified information. The designated agent must attempt to locate the automobile insurance company providing insurance coverage on the motor vehicle being towed within three business days.