

TRANSPORTATION CODE

TITLE 7. VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC

SUBTITLE A. CERTIFICATES OF TITLE AND REGISTRATION OF VEHICLES

CHAPTER 502. REGISTRATION OF VEHICLES

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 502.010. COUNTY SCOFFLAW. (a) Except as otherwise provided by this section, a county assessor-collector or the department may refuse to register a motor vehicle if the assessor-collector or the department receives information that the owner of the vehicle:

(1) owes the county money for a fine, fee, or tax that is past due; or

(2) failed to appear in connection with a complaint, citation, information, or indictment in a court in the county in which a criminal proceeding is pending against the owner.

(b) A county may contract with the department to provide information to the department necessary to make a determination under Subsection (a).

(b-1) Information that is provided to make a determination under Subsection (a)(1) and that concerns the past due status of a fine or fee imposed for a criminal offense and owed to the county expires on the second anniversary of the date the information was provided and may not be used to refuse registration after that date. Once information about a past due fine or fee is provided under Subsection (b), subsequent information about other fines or fees that are imposed for a criminal offense and that become past due before the second anniversary of the date the initial information was provided may not be used, either before or after the second anniversary of that date, to refuse registration under this section unless the

motor vehicle is no longer subject to refusal of registration because of notice received under Subsection (c).

(c) A county that has a contract under Subsection (b) shall notify the department regarding a person for whom the county assessor-collector or the department has refused to register a motor vehicle on:

(1) the person's payment or other means of discharge, including a waiver, of the past due fine, fee, or tax; or

(2) perfection of an appeal of the case contesting payment of the fine, fee, or tax.

(d) After notice is received under Subsection (c), the county assessor-collector or the department may not refuse to register the motor vehicle under Subsection (a).

(e) A contract under Subsection (b) must be entered into in accordance with Chapter 791, Government Code, and is subject to the ability of the parties to provide or pay for the services required under the contract.

(f) Except as otherwise provided by this section, a county that has a contract under Subsection (b) may impose an additional reimbursement fee of \$20 to:

(1) a person who fails to pay a fine, fee, or tax to the county by the date on which the fine, fee, or tax is due; or

(2) a person who fails to appear in connection with a complaint, citation, information, or indictment in a court in which a criminal proceeding is pending against the owner.

(f-1) The additional reimbursement fee may be used only to reimburse the department or the county assessor-collector for its expenses for providing services under the contract, or another county department for expenses related to services under the contract.

(g) In this section:

(1) a fine, fee, or tax is considered past due if it is unpaid 90 or more days after the date it is due; and

(2) registration of a motor vehicle includes renewal of the registration of the vehicle.

(h) This section does not apply to the registration of a motor vehicle under Section [501.0234](#), unless the vehicle is titled and registered in the name of a person who holds a general distinguishing number.

(i) A municipal court judge or justice of the peace who has jurisdiction over the underlying offense may waive an additional reimbursement fee imposed under Subsection (f) if the judge or justice makes a finding that the defendant is economically unable to pay the fee or that good cause exists for the waiver.

(j) If a county assessor-collector is notified that the court having jurisdiction over the underlying offense has waived the past due fine or fee, including a reimbursement fee, due to the defendant's indigency, the county may not impose an additional reimbursement fee on the defendant under Subsection (f).

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 192, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 97, Sec. 1, eff. May 17, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1094 (S.B. [1386](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Transferred, redesignated and amended from Transportation Code, Section 502.185 by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1296 (H.B. [2357](#)), Sec. 76, eff. January 1, 2012.

Amended by:

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 977 (H.B. [351](#)), Sec. 26, eff. September 1, 2017.

Reenacted and amended by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 977 (H.B. [351](#)), Sec. 27, eff. September 1, 2017.

Amended by:

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1127 (S.B. [1913](#)), Sec. 23, eff. September 1, 2017.

Reenacted and amended by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1127 (S.B. [1913](#)), Sec. 24, eff. September 1, 2017.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1352 (S.B. [346](#)), Sec. 2.61,  
eff. January 1, 2020.