

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2017 SESSION

CHAPTER 548

An Act to amend and reenact § 18.2-160.3 of the Code of Virginia, relating to fare enforcement inspectors.

[S 1172]

Approved March 16, 2017

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 18.2-160.3 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 18.2-160.3. Fare enforcement inspectors; failure to produce proof of payment of fare; penalty.

A. For the purposes of this section, "eligible entity" means any transit operation ~~in Planning District 8~~ that is owned or operated directly or indirectly by a political subdivision of the Commonwealth or any governmental entity established by an interstate compact of which Virginia is a signatory.

B. Any eligible entity that either directly or by contract operates any form of mass transit may appoint fare enforcement inspectors and establish the qualifications required for their appointment. Fare enforcement inspectors shall have the power to (i) request patrons at transit boarding locations or on transit vehicles to show proof of payment of the applicable fare; (ii) inspect the proof of payment for validity; (iii) issue a civil summons for violations authorized by this section; (iv) assist with crowd control while on a transit vehicle or at a transit boarding location; and (v) perform such other customer service and safety duties as may be assigned by the eligible entity. The powers of fare enforcement inspectors are limited to those powers enumerated in this section, and fare enforcement inspectors are not required to be law-enforcement officers. The powers of fare enforcement inspectors appointed pursuant to this section shall be exercisable anywhere in the Commonwealth where the appointing eligible entity operates transit service. Fare enforcement inspectors shall report to the department or agency designated by the appointing eligible entity.

C. It shall be unlawful for any person to board or ride a transit operation operated by an eligible entity when he fails or refuses to pay the applicable fare or refuses to produce valid proof of payment of the fare upon request of a fare enforcement inspector. Any person who violates this section shall be liable for a civil penalty of not more than \$100. Any person summoned for a violation may make an appearance in person or in writing by mail to the department of finance or the treasurer of the locality, or the designee of the department of finance or the treasurer, where the violation occurred as specified on the summons prior to the date fixed for trial in court. Any person so appearing may enter a waiver of trial, admit liability, and pay the civil penalty established for the violation charged. Such persons shall be informed of their right to stand trial and that a signature to an admission of liability will have the same force and effect as a judgment of court. If a person charged with a violation does not elect to enter a waiver of trial and admit liability, the violation shall be brought by the eligible entity or the locality in which the violation occurred and tried as a civil case in the general district court in the same manner and with the same right of appeal as provided for by law. In any trial for a violation authorized by this section, it shall be the burden of the eligible entity or locality in which the violation occurred to show the liability of the violator by a preponderance of the evidence. The penalty for failure to pay the established fare on transit properties covered by another provision of law shall be governed by that provision and not by this section.

D. The governing bodies of counties, cities, and towns may adopt ordinances not in conflict with the provisions of this section to appoint fare enforcement inspectors and prescribe their duties in such counties, cities, and towns.

E. The penalty imposed by this section shall not apply to a law-enforcement officer while he is engaged in the performance of his official duties.