LIN LLC

Mobility Legal Updates

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LIN's Mobility Team monitors the latest news, legislative updates, and regulatory trends in the automotive industry to provide our clients with regular newsletters.

The Mobility Team at LIN LLC tracks technological, legislative, and regulatory developments in the automotive and future mobility sectors to summarize key issues for our clients.

Having surpassed a decade of technical demonstrations, the autonomous driving industry is now entering a phase of practical profit generation across both passenger and logistics sectors. Against this backdrop, the State of California in the U.S. recently adopted regulations to tighten regulatory oversight and corporate accountability for driverless vehicles already operating under existing frameworks, while simultaneously permitting the operation of heavy-duty autonomous trucks on public roads, which had previously been prohibited.

This newsletter summarizes these recent shifts, focusing on the regulatory amendments in California.

Comprehensive Overhaul of Driverless Vehicle Regulations in

California (Effective July 1, 2026)

Starting July 1, 2026, California will implement a new regulation (Assembly Bill 1777) that specifies law enforcement protocols and manufacturer responsibilities regarding driverless autonomous vehicles. This institutional measure aims to formalize the enforcement against traffic violations by robotaxis—which previously existed in a regulatory vacuum—and establish an effective legal basis for oversight.

The core of this overhaul lies in the “clarification of liability attribution” for driverless vehicles. Law enforcement may now issue a “Notice of Noncompliance” to manufacturers when robotaxis are found in violation of traffic laws. Manufacturers are then obligated to report such incidents to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) within 72 hours—or 24 hours in the case of major accidents—and if violations accumulate, authorities may impose administrative sanctions, such as limiting fleet size or suspending operating permits.

Emergency response protocols will also be significantly strengthened. Manufacturers are mandated to equip vehicles with dedicated communication channels capable of responding to emergency personnel within 30 seconds, alongside functional two-way voice communication for interaction with on-site personnel. Furthermore, local authorities possess robust authority to activate geofencing during fires or accidents, compelling the immediate evacuation of all autonomous vehicles from the designated area within two minutes.

Imposing liability and reporting obligations on vehicle manufacturers and stipulating administrative sanctions signify a substantial expansion of the legal risks companies must manage during the commercialization phase. Manufacturers are now faced with the challenge of moving beyond mere post-accident response; they must integrate sophisticated compliance systems and technical infrastructure, such as two-way voice

communication, into the design stage.

Authorization of Commercial Operations for Heavy-Duty Autonomous Trucks: Implications for the Logistics Industry

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has officially adopted new regulations permitting the operation of heavy-duty autonomous trucks with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) exceeding 10,000 lbs (approx. 4.5 tons) on public roads. This marks a significant shift from the previous stance of prohibiting heavy-duty autonomous trucks due to safety concerns. It is interpreted as a strategic move to expand the autonomous driving industry beyond passenger transport into the broader logistics sector, thereby ushering in the "Age of Autonomous Logistics."

However, this measure is not a blanket authorization but rather a form of "conditional opening" that mandates safety validation. To obtain final approval for fully driverless operation, manufacturers must first complete at least 500,000 miles (approx. 805,000 km) of testing with a safety driver present to prove the technical safety.

The authorization for the commercial operation of heavy-duty autonomous trucks is expected to bring structural changes to the logistics supply chain over the medium to long term. In particular, as the physical constraints of human labor, such as legal hours of service and mandatory rest periods, are removed, 24/7 continuous transport will become possible, thereby maximizing operational efficiency by reducing delays and lowering logistics costs. Furthermore, competition for market dominance is expected to accelerate between U.S. Big Tech firms and Korean mobility companies that have already launched pilot programs in North America. Accordingly, it is now time for relevant companies to meticulously analyze the testing requirements and safety standards mandated by the regulations and prepare both legally and technically for

entry into the U.S. market.

LIN LLC has extensive experience in providing advisory and litigation services in the mobility sector, particularly in areas such as administrative regulations, and patent and trade secret disputes related to motor vehicles. Our Mobility Team consists of attorneys and experts with a distinctive interest and passion for the automotive industry.

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