

One Minute Brief

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY NATHAN J. HOCHMAN



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BY: Michele A. Hanisee

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TOPIC: New Laws

Below are summaries of selected legislation effective January 1, 2026. The full text of the statutes should be consulted for application.

New Code Sections:

- **Penal Code section 422.3** establishes the offense of threats to commit crimes resulting in death or great bodily injury directed at persons at designated sensitive locations, including a daycare, school, university, workplace, house of worship, or medical facility. Punishable as a misdemeanor or as a PC 1170(h) felony.
- **Elections Code section 18107.5** creates the crime of knowingly/willfully paying or offering money or other valuable consideration to induce a person to vote or register, or where payment is contingent on whether the person voted or the person's registration status. "Valuable consideration" includes lotteries/prize drawings. The code creates express exceptions for transportation of a person to/from a voting location, governmental compensation, or time off to vote. Punishable as a misdemeanor or as a PC 1170(h) felony.
- **Penal Code section 636.6** creates several new offenses related to signal jammers.

"Signal Jammer" is defined as "a device that intentionally blocks, jams, or interferes with authorized radio or wireless communications."

Creates offense of willful/malicious use of a signal jammer to block state/local public safety communications, where the user knows/should know it is likely to cause GBI/death and GBI or death results. Punishable as a misdemeanor or as a PC 1170(h) felony.

Creates misdemeanor offense for operating a signal jammer in conjunction with another misdemeanor or felony offense.

Criminalizes (unless FCC-authorized) the manufacture, importation, marketing, purchase, sale, or operation of a signal jammer. First offense: infraction. Second/subsequent: misdemeanor.

Requires forfeiture of the device upon conviction. Exempts authorized lawful use by local or state law enforcement.

Amendments to Codes:

- **Penal Code section 466** has been amended to expand the list of “burglary tools” to expressly include modern vehicle-theft related devices, including key programming devices, key duplicating devices, and “signal extenders.”

Adds statutory definitions for:

- “Key programming device” / “key duplicating device” (devices capable of accessing a vehicle’s onboard computer to make/delete keys, remotely start without a key, or capture key codes/signals to remotely access a vehicle).
- “Signal extender” (a key-fob amplifier/device that extends a keyless-entry fob signal to enable vehicle access/starting and related commands).

- **Penal Code section 243.3** has been amended to add public transportation providers, as well as their employers and contractors, to the list of persons specifically protected by this battery section. Punishable as a misdemeanor or in state prison for 16 months, or two or three years.

Multiple code sections relating to metal theft have also been amended.

- **Business and Professions Code section 21606** has been amended to expand the recordkeeping requirements for junk dealers and recyclers, requiring them to keep more detailed records of each transaction, including the name of the employee handling each transaction; the amount paid for each transaction; identifying marks or etchings, if any, on metal; serial numbers, if any; and a signed statement from a seller about ownership.
- **Business and Professions Code section 21609.1** has been amended to expand the list of public and utility infrastructure items that junk dealers and recyclers may not possess without written authorization from the owning agency that the items were lawfully sold or authorized for recycling. The expanded list of items includes but is not limited to fire hydrants, manhole covers, streetlights and their components, active grade crossing signals, sewer and stormwater equipment, irrigation wiring, plaques, communication wiring, water meters and components, and EV chargers. If prohibited items are discovered unintentionally, the dealer must notify law enforcement and set the items aside.
- **Penal Code section 496e** is amended to expand the list of items it is illegal for anyone in the scrap or recycling business to knowingly possesses or to fail to report possession of as required. The expanded list includes “reasonably recognizable” streetlights and traffic signals and their components, active grade crossing signals, sewer and stormwater equipment, irrigation wiring, plaques, communication wiring, EV chargers, and water meter components.

This information was current as of publication date. It is not intended as legal advice. It is recommended that readers check for subsequent developments and consult legal advisors to ensure currency after publication. Local policies and procedures regarding application should be observed.