

Senate Bill No. 278

An act relating to transportation of inmates; amending s. 945.091, F.S.; limiting the mode of transport an inmate may use in traveling to and from a place of employment, education, or training; authorizing the Department of Corrections to transport inmates in state-owned vehicles under certain circumstances; creating s. 945.0913, F.S.; prohibiting an inmate from driving a state-owned vehicle to transport inmates in a work-release program; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (1) of section 945.091, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

945.091 Extension of the limits of confinement; restitution by employed inmates.—

(1) The department may adopt rules permitting the extension of the limits of the place of confinement of an inmate as to whom there is reasonable cause to believe that the inmate will honor his or her trust by authorizing the inmate, under prescribed conditions and following investigation and approval by the secretary, or the secretary's designee, who shall maintain a written record of such action, to leave the confines of that place unaccompanied by a custodial agent for a prescribed period of time to:

(a) Visit, for a specified period, a specifically designated place or places:

1. For the purpose of visiting a dying relative, attending the funeral of a relative, or arranging for employment or for a suitable residence for use when released;
2. To otherwise aid in the rehabilitation of the inmate and his or her successful transition into the community; or
3. For another compelling reason consistent with the public interest,

and return to the same or another institution or facility designated by the Department of Corrections.

(b) Work at paid employment, participate in an education or a training program, or voluntarily serve a public or nonprofit agency or faith-based service group in the community, while continuing as an inmate of the institution or facility in which the inmate is confined, except during the hours of his or her employment, education, training, or service and traveling thereto and therefrom. An inmate may travel to and from his or her place of employment, education, or training only by means of walking, bicycling, or using public transportation or transportation that is provided by a family member or employer. Contingent upon specific appropriations, the department may transport an inmate in a state-owned vehicle if the inmate is

unable to obtain other means of travel to his or her place of employment, education, or training.

1. An inmate may participate in paid employment only during the last 36 months of his or her confinement, unless sooner requested by the Parole Commission or the Control Release Authority.

2. While working at paid employment and residing in the facility, an inmate may apply for placement at a contracted substance abuse transition housing program. The transition assistance specialist shall inform the inmate of program availability and assess the inmate's need and suitability for transition housing assistance. If an inmate is approved for placement, the specialist shall assist the inmate. If an inmate requests and is approved for placement in a contracted faith-based substance abuse transition housing program, the specialist must consult with the chaplain prior to such placement. The department shall ensure that an inmate's faith orientation, or lack thereof, will not be considered in determining admission to a faith-based program and that the program does not attempt to convert an inmate toward a particular faith or religious preference.

(c) Participate in a residential or nonresidential rehabilitative program operated by a public or private nonprofit agency, including faith-based service groups, with which the department has contracted for the treatment of such inmate. The provisions of ss. 216.311 and 287.057 shall apply to all contracts between the department and any private entity providing such services. The department shall require such agency to provide appropriate supervision of inmates participating in such program. The department is authorized to terminate any inmate's participation in the program if such inmate fails to demonstrate satisfactory progress in the program as established by departmental rules.

Section 2. Section 945.0913, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

945.0913 Inmates prohibited from driving state-owned vehicles to transport inmates in a work-release program.—An inmate may not drive a state-owned vehicle for the purpose of transporting inmates who are participating in a work-release program authorized in s. 945.091(1)(b).

Section 3. This act shall take effect October 1, 2003.

Approved by the Governor June 12, 2003.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 12, 2003.