

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**Legislative Document**

**No. 1450**

H. P. 1187

House of Representatives, April 12, 1955

Reported by Mr. Browne from the Committee on Judiciary and printed under Joint Rules No. 10.

HARVEY R. PEASE, Clerk

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**STATE OF MAINE**

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED  
FIFTY-FIVE

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**AN ACT Relating to Definition and Duties of "Owner" in Motor Vehicle Laws.**

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Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

**Sec. 1. R. S., c. 22, § 1, amended.** The 8th paragraph of section 1 of chapter 22 of the revised statutes, which relates to the definition of "owner," is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Owner" for the purposes of registration only shall mean any person, firm, corporation or association owning a vehicle or the mortgagor or the vendee in a conditional sales contract, and shall mean any person, firm, corporation or association owning a motor vehicle, or having the right to use the same, under contract, lease or hiring; except, however, the aforesaid definition shall not apply when said vehicle is engaged exclusively for the use set forth in paragraph E of subsection I of section 29 of chapter 48, or acts amendatory thereto; it shall not mean or include a person engaged in the business of renting Maine registered motor vehicles without drivers, as provided for in section 158; provided, however, that nothing contained in this definition shall require an owner or a common or contract carrier by motor vehicle operating under permit or certificate of the Interstate Commerce Commission or the Public Utilities Commission to register a motor vehicle leased by such owner or carrier for the purpose of augmenting such owner's or carrier's equipment, if such motor vehicle is properly registered by the owner thereof in this State;

**Sec. 2. R. S., c. 22, § 13, amended.** The 1st paragraph of section 13 of chapter 22 of the revised statutes is hereby repealed and the following paragraph enacted in place thereof:

'All residents of this State and all such owners as defined in section 1 shall register the same in this State if such motor vehicle is to be operated or remain

on any way in this State, unless the said vehicle is currently registered in this State.'

**Sec. 3. R. S., c. 22, § 157, amended.** Section 157 of chapter 22 of the revised statutes is hereby amended to read as follows:

'**Sec. 157. Owner and renter of motor vehicles to be jointly and severally liable for damages.** The owner of a motor vehicle engaged in the business of renting motor vehicles, **with or** without drivers, who rents any such vehicle, **with or** without a driver, to another, otherwise than as a part of a bona fide transaction involving the sale of such motor vehicle, permitting the renter to operate the vehicle upon the public ways, shall be jointly and severally liable with the renter for any damages caused by the negligence of the latter in operating the vehicle and for any damages caused by the negligence of any person operating the vehicle by or with the permission of the person so renting the vehicle from the owner, except that the foregoing provisions shall not confer any right of action upon any passenger in any such rented vehicle as against the owner, but nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the introduction as a defense of contributory negligence to the extent to which such defense is allowed in other cases.'

**Sec. 4. R. S., c. 22, § 158, amended.** Section 158 of chapter 22 of the revised statutes is hereby amended to read as follows:

'**Sec. 158. Owner of rented motor vehicles to keep a record of the renter.** Every person engaged in the business of renting motor vehicles **with or** without drivers who shall rent any such vehicle **with or** without a driver, otherwise than as a part of a bona fide transaction involving the sale of such motor vehicle, shall maintain a record of the identity of the person to whom the vehicle is rented, including a record of his license, and the exact time the vehicle is the subject to such rental or in possession of the person renting and having the use of the vehicle, and every such record shall be ~~a public record and~~ open to inspection by any officer, and it shall be a misdemeanor for any such owner to fail to make or have in possession or to refuse an inspection of the record required in this section. If the Secretary of State prescribes a form for the keeping of the record provided for in this section, the owner shall use said form, **which shall be carried in the vehicle at all times during the period of lease or hire as aforesaid and while being used on the highways in this State.'**