

Key Enforcement Laws to Know in 2025

From February of 2025, consumer consent will be required to increase the subscription fee for online services, and from April, administrative penalties will be exempted for law abiding small business owners or self-employed people that have been victimized by the falsification, alteration, or theft of identification documents by minors. The Ministry of Government Legislation (Minister Lee Wan-kyu) introduces some of the key details and enforcement dates of the forthcoming statutes for the year 2025.

Enhanced Tax Incentives Introduced to Encourage Marriage and Boost Savings for Wealth Building (「ACT ON RESTRICTION ON SPECIAL CASES CONCERNING TAXATION」, January 1)

Starting next year, the tax credit for marriage will be newly established and the total annual income threshold for dual-income households to apply for labor encouragement subsidies will be raised. For those who register their marriage between 2024 and 2026, a tax credit of 500,000 won will be deducted from the total income tax for the tax period that includes the day of the marriage registration, limited to one time per individual. In addition, to ensure that single households are not disadvantaged due to marriage in applying for labor encouragement subsidies, the total annual income threshold for applying for these subsidies will be raised from 38 million won per year for households with dual-income earners to 44 million won per

year, double the gross income threshold for single households. Furthermore, to support the housing needs of homeless households, the income deduction and the interest income tax exemption* for housing subscription saving accounts will be expanded from the head of the household to his or her spouse.

* The tax exemption on interest income is subject to the collective savings account for housing subscription giving preferential treatment to youths.

Online Service Providers Must Seek Consumer Consent Prior to Subscription Price Changes (「ACT ON THE CONSUMER PROTECTION IN ELECTRONIC COMMERCE」, February 14)

As of February 14, e-commerce merchants who increase the price of a subscription or switch from a free to a paid subscription must obtain the consumer's consent to the date, price before and after the change, and payment method before implementing the change. This regulation is designed to prevent consumers from being unaware of the increase in the subscription fee or conversion to a paid subscription and being charged automatically. Accordingly, e-commerce merchants must acquire prior consent from consumers 30 days in advance when increasing the fee of a subscription and 14 days in advance when converting to a paid subscription, and inform consumers of the conditions and methods for cancelling or terminating the increase or conversion.

Motorcycle Inspections and Economic Compensation for Overstating Electric Vehicle Range Introduced (「MOTOR VEHICLE MANAGEMENT ACT」, March 15)

From March 15, inspections will be introduced for motorcycles, including usage inspection, regular inspection, inspection of tuning, and provisional inspection. Inspections will check whether the safety,

exhaust gas, noise and vibration of a motorcycle meet the inspection standards, and a fine of up to 1 million won will be imposed on those who fail to undergo regular inspections. In addition, the fine for those who fail to report the use of a motorcycle or operate a motorcycle without a license plate will be increased to up to 3 million won. Meanwhile, if the electric vehicle's range per charge is overstated, the manufacturer can take corrective measures or provide economic compensation, and if the vehicle's performance, such as energy consumption efficiency or range per charge, is degraded after correcting the defect, the manufacturer must provide economic compensation for consumer damage.

Gym Closure or Suspension Must Be Notified to Members in Advance (「INSTALLATION AND UTILIZATION OF SPORTS FACILITIES ACT」, April 23)

As of April 23, gyms and other sports facilities must notify their members and general users of the closure at least 14 days before the scheduled date if they plan to close for more than the period specified by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. In the event of a violation, a fine of up to 1 million won will be imposed. The law has been revised to provide enhanced protection for gym users in response to cases where gyms induce members to pay in advance and then unilaterally close down.

Waiver of Administrative Penalties for Innocent Businesses Victimized by Fake, Altered, or Stolen IDs from Minors (「FOOD SANITATION ACT」, April 23)

Beginning on April 23, public health businesses including 24-hour public bath businesses and lodgings will be exempt from

administrative penalties under certain conditions, such as when they can prove they were unaware of an individual's age due to falsified, altered, or stolen identification, or if they failed to verify the person's identity due to assault or intimidation. In addition, clear grounds are established requiring individuals to present proof of age for verification, and allowing businesses to restrict entry for those who fail to present valid proof without justification. The amendments aim to reduce the burden on public health businesses requiring age verification while preventing disputes related to restricting access to minors.

Relaxed Installation Standards for Hydrogen Fueling Stations (「ENFORCEMENT RULE OF THE HIGH-PRESSURE GAS SAFETY CONTROL ACT」, May 15)

From May 15, it will be easier to install hydrogen fueling stations in urban areas if a protective barrier made of concrete or other sturdy materials is built high around the station, as the separation distance requirements from surrounding facilities have been relaxed. Previously, it was difficult to install hydrogen fueling stations in urban centers because a minimum safety distance of 12 to 30 meters from surrounding facilities, such as houses and shopping malls, was mandatory. However, to promote the hydrogen industry and allow hydrogen fueling stations to be safely installed in urban areas, the standards have been significantly relaxed. For example, the distance requirement can be waived if additional safety equipment is installed to mitigate risks such as explosions.

Prohibition on Suspected Drunk Drivers Consuming Additional Alcohol After Driving (「ROAD TRAFFIC ACT」, June 4)

Starting June 4, it will be prohibited for an individual who provides a police officer with reasonable grounds to believe that he or she is intoxicated to drink additional alcohol after driving a motor vehicle with the intent to impair a breathalyzer test. Individuals who violate this law will be subject to the same penalties as those who fails to comply with a breath test, including revocation and disqualification period of their driver's license. The legislation has been amended to enhance the accuracy and fairness of drunk driving control.

30% income deduction for gym, pool, and other athletic facility fees (「ACT ON RESTRICTION ON SPECIAL CASES CONCERNING TAXATION」, July 1)

Starting in July, taxpayers will be able to receive a deduction on one's income 30% of gym and swimming pool fees. The cultural expense deduction, which has previously applied to purchasing books, attending performances, and entering museums, will also apply to gyms and swimming pools from July next year, allowing working income earners with a total salary of 70 million won or less to deduct 30% of facility fees, up to a maximum of 3 million won. However, fees for private lessons are not eligible for the deduction. This is available to sports facilities registered with local governments nationwide under the Installation and Utilization of Sports Facilities Act.

The reasons for the enactment of the new statutes, including those stated above, can be found at the Korean Law Information Center (www.law.go.kr).

(Unofficial Translation)

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