

FACT SHEET

Registration Plate Re-Issuance

Act 133 of 2008 eliminated the requirement for PennDOT to re-issue registration plates every 10 years. The law now allows PennDOT to reissue a registration plate upon request of a vehicle owner when an authorized representative of PennDOT or law enforcement determines that a registration plate is illegible. Effective January 26, 2009, safety inspection mechanics are authorized representatives of PennDOT and may determine if the registration plate is legible. (**NOTE:** A registration plate is deemed illegible when one or more numbers or letters cannot be recognized from 50 feet or if the plate shows any blistering, peeling, discoloration or loss of reflectivity.)

To apply for a free standard registration plate, the vehicle owner should visit any official Pennsylvania inspection station for verification that their plate is illegible and receive Form MV-46, "Authorization to Replace Registration Plate," from the station **OR** have a law enforcement official verify the need for a replacement plate on Form MV-44, "Application for Duplicate Registration Card, Replacement of Registration Plate or Weight Class Sticker," obtained from PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services website at www.dmv.pa.gov. The vehicle owner is then responsible for signing and returning either Form MV-46 or Form MV-44 to PennDOT in order to receive a replacement registration plate, free of charge.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Can a vehicle fail inspection for having an illegible registration plate?

A. No. The Vehicle Equipment and Inspection Regulations state that the only time a vehicle will fail an inspection is if the registration plate is hanging loosely, the registration plate is not in agreement with the numbers on the registration card, the registration plate is obscured or the registration plate lamp, if originally equipped, does not illuminate the registration plate.

Q. What happens if a vehicle owner does not send in Form MV-46 or Form MV-44?

A. The operator of the vehicle would be in violation of Section 1332 of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, which may result in a \$100 fine.

Q. What does a vehicle owner do with the old registration plate?

A. It should be destroyed or returned to PennDOT to be recycled. Old registration plates may be returned to: Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Return Tag Unit, P.O. Box 68597, Harrisburg, PA 17106-8597.

Q. If a vehicle has a Special Fund (e.g. Wildlife Resource) or a Special Organization (e.g. Penn State Alumni) plate requiring replacement, what type of plate will the owner receive?

A. The vehicle owner will receive a free standard issue plate. If another special fund or special organization plate is desired, the vehicle owner must reapply and pay the applicable fees.

Q. Are there any types of plates that will be replaced with the same letter/number configuration?

A. Yes. If the vehicle owner has a standard issued personalized registration plate, they will receive a replacement registration plate bearing the same letters and/or numerals, free of charge. If a personalized registration plate is being replaced, the vehicle owner's inspection mechanic should complete Form MV-46, Sections A, B, and C, and the inspection mechanic should be sure any spaces or dashes are listed in the proper location on Form MV-46, or law enforcement officials should be sure any spaces or dashes are listed in the proper location on Form MV-44.

Q. After the owner applies for a new plate, how long will it take to receive the plate?

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- A. Once PennDOT receives the request, it could take up to 15 days for the registrant to receive their standard issue plate and between 4-6 weeks for a personalized plate.
- Q. What does a vehicle owner do if their vehicle is not due for inspection and believes they are in need of a replacement plate?**
- A. It is unlawful to display on a vehicle a registration plate that is obscured or otherwise illegible. If the registration plate cannot be recognized from a distance, or if the registration plate shows any blistering, peeling, discoloration or loss of reflectivity, the vehicle owner should visit any official Pennsylvania inspection station for verification that the plate is illegible and receive Form MV-46, "Authorization to Replace Registration Plate," from the station **OR** have a law enforcement official verify the need for a replacement plate on Form MV-44, "Application for Duplicate Registration Card, Replacement of Registration Plate or Weight Class Sticker" obtained from PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services website at www.dmv.pa.gov. The vehicle owner is then responsible for signing and returning either Form MV-46 or Form MV-44 to PennDOT in order to receive a replacement registration plate, free of charge.

Additional questions may be directed to PennDOT's Customer Call Center at [717-412-5300](tel:717-412-5300).