



COLORADO
Department of Revenue
Division of Motor Vehicles

Public FAQs:

SB21-069 License Plate Expiration on Change of Ownership

Overview

With the implementation of SB21-069 License Plate Expiration on Change of Ownership, the following changes will take effect:

- **License plate reissuance.** The law specifies that license plates for Tax Class C motor vehicles will expire upon transfer of the owner's title or interest in the vehicle. However, the owner will retain the priority right to use the same combination of letters or numbers from the expired plates when registering a new vehicle. To do so, the owner must apply for personalized plates. This requirement does not apply to owners who currently have personalized plates, have a valuable registration that has been reserved for use under the "Laura Hershey Disability Act," or is a horseless carriage plate. Tax Class C motor vehicles include passenger vehicles, motorhomes and motorcycles.
- **Previously retired style.** The law also authorizes DOR to issue license plates for passenger cars and trucks in a previously retired style (white alpha-numerals on a background of green mountains and white sky) for an additional fee. The plate is Print on Demand (POD) so the customer pays the production cost with the purchase of the plate. Applicants for license plates in the previously retired style must pay \$118.06 for initial issuance, of which \$50 is credited to the disability support fund.

DMV Background

When Coloradans sell or otherwise dispose of their vehicle, they will not be able to transfer the license plate from their old vehicle to their new vehicle in the same manner they have previously. Previously, when selling your vehicle and purchasing a new vehicle, you could transfer the license plate from your old vehicle to your new vehicle without paying new plate fees (personalized plates required a \$12 fee). (42-3-211(6)(c)). Beginning January 1, 2022, SB21-069 goes into effect and Coloradans will not be able to keep their previous license plates unless they are currently personalized or the vehicle is a horseless carriage.

Fees vary by plate type and configuration (e.g., sequence of letters and numbers on the license plate). A regular green and white plate with a random configuration will cost a customer \$4.73 (cheapest option). Customers wishing to keep their configuration (e.g., ABC-123 or ABC-D12) can expect to pay \$68.06. The most expensive option is to obtain the historical license plate and keep their current configuration at \$118.06. Keeping their current configuration requires a personalized plate application which will transition their license plate to what is considered a "vanity" plate. We anticipate this will cause some dissatisfaction both with the plate holders and the county offices issuing the plates.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **I want to transfer my current license plate to a vehicle I will buy soon. Can I do this?**
 - Yes, you can keep your current plate configuration. You will need a personalized plate application.
- **How much will it cost to keep my current license plate?**
 - Fees will vary depending on what type of plate you have. Coloradans wishing to keep their current license plate configuration will need to pay \$68.06. The most expensive fee is \$118.06 and is for Coloradans wishing to obtain a historical plate and its current configuration.
- **I don't want to keep my current license plate configuration. How much will it cost for a regular green and white plate with a random configuration?**
 - That is the most inexpensive option and costs \$4.73
- **Why the change?**
 - It is due to the License Plate Expiration On Change Of Ownership Act of 2021, which aims to make Colorado highways and byways safer for all motorists and first responders.
- **How exactly will it help?**
 - Colorado lawmakers took action to improve safety for first responders while also creating a way to fight congestion. The new law establishes a license plate reissue program that enhances public safety by registered vehicles in Colorado having a serviceable license plate that is reflective and visible in low-light environments.

On average, license plates lose 50% of their reflectivity within 5 to 10 years of use and the average age of motor vehicles in Colorado is 6 years.
- **Will I lose any remaining credit for registration fees and taxes?**
 - No, only the license plate is required to be replaced. Any credit of registration fees and taxes can be transferred at the county motor vehicle office and used on the new vehicle
- **I want to transfer my current plate from one of my vehicles to another vehicle I own. Can I do that?**
 - You can keep your current plate configuration if you applied for a personalized plate for that vehicle. You can not just transfer it to the other vehicle.

- **I am conducting a private sale of my vehicle. Should I leave my current plates on the car?**
 - No, please take your plates off before the transaction is completed. You cannot transfer your plates to the new owner. If you leave your plates on the vehicle, you would be responsible for any fines/tolls accrued while the vehicle has your plates.

- **Can you transfer your existing vanity plate?**
 - Yes, vanity plates are not required to be replaced with SB21-069.

- **Do I get a credit for the old plate toward the new plate if I sell my vehicle?**
 - Yes, you will receive a credit for the time remaining on your previous plate. This credit can be applied to any new plate that you are eligible for.

- **Is this just for the regular green and white plates or all plate types?**
 - This is for all plate types.

- **Do you have to pay the fee again for the veteran plates?**
 - No, if the plate being replaced is the same veteran plate (e.g., U.S. Army to U.S. Army) if changing to a new veteran plate all fees apply (e.g., U.S. Army to Honorably Discharged Veteran).

- **Who should I contact if I have questions about the new changes?**
 - If you have questions about registering your vehicle, please contact us at dor_trcustomerservice@state.co.us