

HOUSE FLOOR SUBSTITUTE FOR  
HOUSE BILL 158

53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2018

AN ACT

RELATING TO LICENSE PLATES; REQUIRING CERTAIN MOTOR VEHICLES TO  
DISPLAY FRONT END LICENSE PLATES; INCREASING LICENSE PLATE  
FEES; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 66-3-14 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1978,  
Chapter 35, Section 34, as amended) is amended to read:

"66-3-14. REGISTRATION PLATES OR VALIDATING STICKERS TO  
BE FURNISHED BY DEPARTMENT--REFLECTIVE MATERIAL.--

A. The department upon registering a vehicle shall  
issue a registration plate or a validating sticker to the owner  
of the vehicle. The validating sticker may be designed and  
required to be placed on the registration plate or elsewhere on  
the vehicle as prescribed by the department.

B. Except for vehicles registered pursuant to

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underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete

1 Section 66-3-27 or 66-3-423 NMSA 1978, for vehicles for which  
2 ownership is transferred on or after July 1, 2020, the  
3 department upon registering a vehicle shall issue [a] two  
4 registration [~~plate~~] plates or [a] two validating [~~sticker~~]  
5 stickers to the owner of the vehicle. The validating [~~sticker~~]  
6 stickers may be designed and required to be placed on the  
7 registration [~~plate~~] plates or elsewhere on the vehicle as  
8 prescribed by the department.

9 [B.] C. Each registration plate shall have a  
10 background of reflective material such that the registration  
11 number assigned to the vehicle is plainly legible from a  
12 distance of one hundred feet at night. The colors shall  
13 include those of the state flag, except prestige and special  
14 plates.

15 [G.] D. Each registration plate shall have  
16 displayed upon it:

17 (1) the registration number assigned to the  
18 person to whom it was issued; and

19 (2) the name of this state.

20 [~~D.~~] E. The department shall issue no registration  
21 plates for privately owned vehicles that contain the words  
22 "staff officer" or any other title except as otherwise provided  
23 by law.

24 [~~E.~~] F. All registration plates for private  
25 vehicles shall be alike in form except for the owner's

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1 registration number. The department shall adopt registration  
2 number systems for registration plates.

3 ~~[F.]~~ G. In lieu of or in addition to a registration  
4 plate or sticker for commercial motor vehicles, the department  
5 may issue an electronic identifying device."

6 SECTION 2. Section 66-3-17 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1978,  
7 Chapter 35, Section 37, as amended) is amended to read:

8 "66-3-17. REGISTRATION PLATE--REPLACEMENT OF PLATE.--

9 A. Succeeding registration renewals of the  
10 registration plate issued under Section 66-3-14 NMSA 1978 shall  
11 cause the ~~[division]~~ department to issue a validating sticker  
12 only, except as provided in Subsections B ~~[and C]~~ through D of  
13 this section.

14 B. The person to whom the plate is issued may, at  
15 any time, apply for the issuance of a duplicate or replacement  
16 plate, and upon the surrender of the registration plate ~~[he]~~  
17 the person then has, along with the payment of a reasonable fee  
18 set by the ~~[director]~~ secretary that will cover the cost of the  
19 production and distribution of the plate, the applicant shall  
20 be issued a duplicate or replacement plate.

21 C. Any peace officer may, upon discovering that the  
22 registration plate of any vehicle is illegible because of wear  
23 or damage or other cause, issue a citation to the owner or  
24 operator of the vehicle. The citation shall provide that the  
25 owner shall, within thirty days from the date of the citation,

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1 apply for and obtain a duplicate or replacement plate from the  
2 [~~division~~] department.

3 D. Except for vehicles registered pursuant to  
4 Section 66-3-27 or 66-3-423 NMSA 1978, for vehicles for which  
5 ownership is transferred on or after July 1, 2020, registration  
6 renewals of a registration plate issued under Section 66-3-14  
7 NMSA 1978 shall cause the department to issue a registration  
8 plate until two legible plates have been issued for the motor  
9 vehicle."

10 SECTION 3. Section 66-3-18 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1978,  
11 Chapter 35, Section 38, as amended) is amended to read:

12 "66-3-18. DISPLAY OF REGISTRATION PLATES AND TEMPORARY  
13 REGISTRATION PERMITS--DISPLAYS PROHIBITED AND ALLOWED.--

14 A. The registration plate shall be attached to the  
15 rear of the vehicle for which it is issued; however, the  
16 registration plate shall be attached to the front of a road  
17 tractor or truck tractor. The plate shall be securely fastened  
18 at all times in a fixed horizontal position at a height of not  
19 less than twelve inches from the ground, measuring from the  
20 bottom of the plate. It shall be in a place and position so as  
21 to be clearly visible, and it shall be maintained free from  
22 foreign material and in a condition to be clearly legible.

23 B. Except for vehicles registered pursuant to  
24 Section 66-3-27 or 66-3-423 NMSA 1978, for vehicles for which  
25 ownership is transferred on or after July 1, 2020, registration

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1 plates shall be attached to the front and the rear of the  
2 vehicle for which [~~it is~~] they are issued [~~however, the~~  
3 ~~registration plate shall be attached to the front of a road~~  
4 ~~tractor or truck tractor~~]. The [~~plate~~] plates shall be  
5 securely fastened at all times in a fixed horizontal position  
6 at a height of not less than twelve inches from the ground,  
7 measuring from the bottom of the plate. [~~It~~] They shall be in  
8 a place and position so as to be clearly visible, and [~~it~~] they  
9 shall be maintained free from foreign material and in a  
10 condition to be clearly legible.

11 [~~B.~~] C. A demonstration or temporary registration  
12 permit shall be firmly affixed to the inside left rear window  
13 of the vehicle to which it is issued, unless such display  
14 presents a safety hazard or the demonstration or temporary  
15 registration permit is not visible or readable from that  
16 position, in which case, the demonstration or temporary  
17 registration permit shall be displayed in such a manner that it  
18 is clearly visible from the rear or left side of the vehicle.

19 [~~C.~~] D. No vehicle while being operated on the  
20 highways of this state shall have displayed either on the front  
21 or the rear of the vehicle any registration plate, including  
22 validating sticker, other than one issued or validated for the  
23 current registration period by the department or any other  
24 licensing authority having jurisdiction over the vehicle. No  
25 expired registration plate or validating sticker shall be

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1 displayed on the vehicle. [~~other than an expired special~~  
2 ~~registration plate, which may be exhibited on the front of the~~  
3 ~~vehicle.~~

4 D.] E. Nothing contained in this section shall be  
5 construed as prohibiting the use of a promotional or  
6 advertising plate on the front of the vehicle for vehicles for  
7 which ownership was not transferred on or after July 1, 2020."

8 SECTION 4. A new section of Chapter 66, Article 6 NMSA  
9 1978 is enacted to read:

10 "[NEW MATERIAL] FRONT REGISTRATION PLATE FEE.--Except for  
11 registration plates issued pursuant to Section 66-3-27,  
12 66-3-415 or 66-3-423 NMSA 1978 or issued at no charge pursuant  
13 to Section 66-3-409, 66-3-411, 66-3-412, 66-3-413, 66-3-414,  
14 66-3-421 or 66-3-424.24 NMSA 1978, in addition to all other  
15 fees collected by registration of vehicles pursuant to Section  
16 66-3-1 NMSA 1978 or by registration of vehicles pursuant to the  
17 Motor Transportation Act, there is imposed on each  
18 registration, for each year covered by the registration, a  
19 front registration plate fee of two dollars (\$2.00) to be  
20 retained by the department and appropriated to the department  
21 to defray the cost of making and issuing front registration  
22 plates."

23 SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the  
24 provisions of this act is July 1, 2018.