

HOUSE BILL 231

54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2019

INTRODUCED BY

Patricio Ruiloba and William "Bill" R. Rehm

AN ACT

RELATING TO LICENSE PLATES; REQUIRING 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. Except as provided in Subsection B of this  
section, the department upon registering a vehicle shall issue  
[a] two registration [~~plate~~] plates or [a] two validating  
[~~sticker~~] stickers to the owner of the vehicle. The validating  
[~~sticker~~] stickers may be designed and required to be placed on  
the registration [~~plate~~] plates or elsewhere on the vehicle as

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1 prescribed by the department.

2 B. For motor vehicles registered pursuant to  
3 Section 66-3-27 or 66-3-423 NMSA 1978 and for trailers,  
4 semitrailers, pole trailers, manufactured homes, school buses,  
5 state government vehicles, motorcycles and off-highway motor  
6 vehicles, the department upon registering the vehicle shall  
7 issue a registration plate or a validating sticker to the owner  
8 of the vehicle. The validating sticker may be designed and  
9 required to be placed on the registration plate or elsewhere on  
10 the vehicle as prescribed by the department.

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

17 [~~G-~~] D. Each registration plate shall have  
18 displayed upon it:

19 (1) the registration number assigned to the  
20 person to whom it was issued; and

21 (2) the name of this state.

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

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1           ~~[E-]~~ F. All registration plates for private  
2 vehicles shall be alike in form except for the owner's  
3 registration number. The department shall adopt registration  
4 number systems for registration plates.

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

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

10           "66-3-17. REGISTRATION ~~[PLATE]~~ RENEWAL--REPLACEMENT OF  
11 [PLATE] PLATES--VALIDATING STICKERS.--

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

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

25           C. ~~[Any]~~ A peace officer may, upon discovering that

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1     ~~the~~ a registration plate of ~~any~~ a vehicle is illegible  
2     because of wear or damage or other cause, issue a citation to  
3     the owner or operator of the vehicle. The citation shall  
4     provide that the owner shall, within thirty days from the date  
5     of the citation, apply for and obtain ~~a~~ duplicate or  
6     replacement ~~plate~~ plates from the division.

7             D. Except for vehicles qualifying for registration  
8     pursuant to Subsection B of Section 66-3-14 NMSA 1978, a  
9     registration renewal for a vehicle that had been issued one  
10    registration plate pursuant to Section 66-3-14 NMSA 1978 prior  
11    to July 1, 2023 shall cause the department to issue two  
12    replacement registration plates for the vehicle."

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

15            "66-3-18. DISPLAY OF REGISTRATION PLATES AND TEMPORARY  
16    REGISTRATION PERMITS--DISPLAYS PROHIBITED AND ALLOWED.--

17            A. ~~The registration plate~~ Except for vehicles  
18    registered pursuant to Subsection B of Section 66-3-14 NMSA  
19    1978, registration plates shall be attached to the front and  
20    rear of the vehicle for which ~~it is~~ they are issued.  
21    ~~however, the registration plate shall be attached to the front~~  
22    ~~of a road tractor or truck tractor. The~~ Each plate shall be  
23    securely fastened at all times in a fixed horizontal position  
24    at a height of not less than twelve inches from the ground,  
25    measuring from the bottom of ~~the~~ each plate. ~~It~~ Each plate

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1 shall be in a place and position so as to be clearly visible,  
2 and [~~it~~] they shall be maintained free from foreign material  
3 and in a condition to be clearly legible.

4 B. For vehicles registered pursuant to Subsection B  
5 of Section 66-3-14 NMSA 1978, the registration plate shall be  
6 attached to the rear of the vehicle for which it is issued.

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

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

25 ~~D. Nothing contained in this section shall be~~

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1 ~~construed as prohibiting the use of a promotional or~~  
2 ~~advertising plate on the front of the vehicle.]~~

3 E. A violation of a provision of this section is a  
4 penalty assessment misdemeanor."

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

7 "[NEW MATERIAL] FRONT REGISTRATION PLATE FEE.--Except for  
8 registration plates issued pursuant to Section 66-3-27,  
9 66-3-415 or 66-3-423 NMSA 1978 or issued at no charge pursuant  
10 to Section 66-3-409, 66-3-411, 66-3-412, 66-3-413, 66-3-414,  
11 66-3-421 or 66-3-424.24 NMSA 1978, in addition to all other  
12 fees collected by registration of vehicles pursuant to Section  
13 66-3-1 NMSA 1978 or by registration of vehicles pursuant to the  
14 Motor Transportation Act, there is imposed on each  
15 registration, for each year covered by the registration, a  
16 front registration plate fee of two dollars (\$2.00) to be  
17 retained by the department and appropriated to the department  
18 to defray the cost of making and issuing front registration  
19 plates."

20 SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.--

21 A. The effective date of the provisions of Sections  
22 1 through 3 of this act is July 1, 2023.

23 B. The effective date of the provisions of Section  
24 4 of this act is July 1, 2019.