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HOUSE BILL 2419

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State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Representatives Pike, Goodman, Young, Shea, Vick, Buys, Magendanz, Muri, Condotta, Scott, and Wilson

Read first time 01/13/16. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to authorizing the department of licensing to not  
2 issue front license plates for certain vehicles; reenacting and  
3 amending RCW 46.16A.200; and providing an effective date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 46.16A.200 and 2014 c 181 s 2 and 2014 c 80 s 1 are  
6 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

7 (1) **Design.** All license plates may be obtained by the director  
8 from the metal working plant of a state correctional facility or from  
9 any source in accordance with existing state of Washington purchasing  
10 procedures. License plates:

11 (a) May vary in background, color, and design;

12 (b) Must be legible and clearly identifiable as a Washington  
13 state license plate;

14 (c) Must designate the name of the state of Washington without  
15 abbreviation;

16 (d) Must be treated with fully reflectorized materials designed  
17 to increase visibility and legibility at night;

18 (e) Must be of a size and color and show the registration period  
19 as determined by the director; and

20 (f) Before July 1, 2010, may display a symbol or artwork approved  
21 by the former special license plate review board and the legislature.

1 Beginning July 1, 2010, special license plate series approved by the  
2 department and enacted into law by the legislature may display a  
3 symbol or artwork approved by the department.

4 (2) **Exceptions to reflectorized materials.** License plates issued  
5 before January 1, 1968, are not required to be treated with  
6 reflectorized materials.

7 (3) **Dealer license plates.** License plates issued to a dealer must  
8 contain an indication that the license plates have been issued to a  
9 vehicle dealer.

10 (4)(a) **Furnished.** The director (~~shall~~) must furnish to all  
11 persons making satisfactory application for a vehicle registration:

12 (i) Two identical license plates each containing the license  
13 plate number; or

14 (ii) One license plate if the vehicle is a trailer, semitrailer,  
15 camper, moped, collector vehicle, horseless carriage, or motorcycle,  
16 or if the vehicle was originally manufactured without an installed  
17 bracket, device, or other means to display and secure a license plate  
18 on the front of the vehicle.

19 (b) The director may adopt types of license plates to be used as  
20 long as the license plates are legible.

21 (c) Any vehicle originally manufactured without an installed  
22 bracket, device, or other means to display and secure a license plate  
23 on the front of the vehicle, and registered in an area near a toll  
24 facility that does not allow the payment of tolls manually at a  
25 tollbooth, may be required by department rule to purchase and use a  
26 "Good to Go!" pass. The department must hold a public hearing on the  
27 rule at a location within each area that will be subject to the  
28 requirements in the rule.

29 (5)(a) **Display.** License plates must be:

30 (i) Attached conspicuously at the front and rear of each vehicle  
31 if two license plates have been issued;

32 (ii) Attached to the rear of the vehicle if one license plate has  
33 been issued;

34 (iii) Kept clean and be able to be plainly seen and read at all  
35 times; and

36 (iv) Attached in a horizontal position at a distance of not more  
37 than four feet from the ground.

38 (b) The Washington state patrol may grant exceptions to this  
39 subsection if the body construction of the vehicle makes compliance  
40 with this section impossible.

1           (6) **Change of license classification.** A person who has altered a  
2 vehicle that makes the current license plate or plates invalid for  
3 the vehicle's use (~~shall~~) must:

4           (a) Surrender the current license plate or plates to the  
5 department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by  
6 the director;

7           (b) Apply for a new license plate or plates; and

8           (c) Pay a change of classification fee required under RCW  
9 46.17.310.

10          (7) **Unlawful acts.** It is unlawful to:

11          (a) Display a license plate or plates on the front or rear of any  
12 vehicle that were not issued by the director for the vehicle;

13          (b) Display a license plate or plates on any vehicle that have  
14 been changed, altered, or disfigured, or have become illegible;

15          (c) Use holders, frames, or other materials that change, alter,  
16 or make a license plate or plates illegible. License plate frames may  
17 be used on license plates only if the frames do not obscure license  
18 tabs or identifying letters or numbers on the plates and the license  
19 plates can be plainly seen and read at all times;

20          (d) Operate a vehicle unless a valid license plate or plates are  
21 attached as required under this section;

22          (e) Transfer a license plate or plates issued under this chapter  
23 between two or more vehicles without first making application to  
24 transfer the license plates. A violation of this subsection (7)(e) is  
25 a traffic infraction subject to a fine not to exceed five hundred  
26 dollars. Any law enforcement agency that determines that a license  
27 plate or plates have been transferred between two or more vehicles  
28 shall confiscate the license plate or plates and return them to the  
29 department for nullification along with full details of the reasons  
30 for confiscation. Each vehicle identified in the transfer will be  
31 issued a new license plate or plates upon application by the owner or  
32 owners and the payment of full fees and taxes; or

33          (f) Fail, neglect, or refuse to endorse the registration  
34 certificate, except as authorized under this section.

35          (8) **Transfer.** (a) Standard issue license plates must be replaced  
36 when ownership of the vehicle changes, pursuant to subsection  
37 (9)(a)(i) of this section, but the registered owner may retain the  
38 license plates and transfer them to a replacement vehicle of the same  
39 use. In addition to all other taxes and fees due upon change in  
40 ownership, a registered owner wishing to keep standard issue license

1 plates shall pay the license plate transfer fee required under RCW  
2 46.17.200(1)(c) when applying for license plate transfer.

3 (b) Special license plates and personalized license plates may be  
4 treated in the same manner as described in (a) of this subsection  
5 unless otherwise limited by law.

6 (c) License plates issued to the state or any county, city, town,  
7 school district, or other political subdivision entitled to exemption  
8 as provided by law may be treated in the same manner as described in  
9 (a) of this subsection.

10 (d) License plate replacement is not required when a change in  
11 vehicle ownership is the result of one or more of the following  
12 circumstances:

13 (i) When adding a lien holder to the certificate of title or  
14 removing a lien holder from the certificate of title;

15 (ii) When a vehicle is transferred from one spouse or registered  
16 domestic partner to another;

17 (iii) When removing a deceased spouse or registered domestic  
18 partner from the certificate of title;

19 (iv) When a vehicle is transferred by gift or inheritance to one  
20 or more members of the registered owner's immediate family;

21 (v) When a vehicle is transferred into or out of a trust in which  
22 the registered owner or one or more immediate family members of the  
23 registered owner is the beneficiary;

24 (vi) When a leaseholder buys out the leased vehicle; or

25 (vii) When a person changes his or her name.

26 (9) **Replacement.** (a) Except as provided in subsection (8)(a) of  
27 this section, an owner or the owner's authorized representative must  
28 apply for a replacement license plate or plates: (i) When taking  
29 ownership of the vehicle; (ii) if the current license plate or plates  
30 assigned to the vehicle have been lost, defaced, or destroyed; or  
31 (iii) if one or both plates have become so illegible or are in such a  
32 condition as to be difficult to distinguish. An owner or the owner's  
33 authorized representative may apply for a replacement license plate  
34 or plates at any time the owner chooses. The department shall offer  
35 to owners the option of retaining the current license plate number  
36 when obtaining replacement license plates for the fee required in RCW  
37 46.17.200(1)(b).

38 (b) The application for a replacement license plate or plates  
39 must:

40 (i) Be on a form furnished or approved by the director; and

1 (ii) Be accompanied by the fee required under RCW  
2 46.17.200(1)(a).

3 (c) When a vehicle is sold to a vehicle dealer for resale, the  
4 application for a replacement plate or plates need not be made until  
5 the vehicle is sold by the vehicle dealer.

6 (d) The department (~~shall~~) may not require the payment of any  
7 fee to replace a license plate or plates for vehicles owned, rented,  
8 or leased by foreign countries or international bodies to which the  
9 United States government is a signatory by treaty.

10 (10) **Replacement—Exceptions.** The following license plates are not  
11 required to be replaced as required in subsection (9) of this  
12 section:

13 (a) Horseless carriage license plates issued under RCW 46.18.255  
14 before January 1, 1987;

15 (b) Medal of Honor license plates issued under RCW 46.18.230;

16 (c) License plates for commercial motor vehicles with a gross  
17 weight greater than twenty-six thousand pounds.

18 (11) **Rules.** The department may adopt rules to implement this  
19 section.

20 (12) **Tabs or emblems.** The director may issue tabs or emblems to  
21 be attached to license plates or elsewhere on the vehicle to signify  
22 initial registration and renewals. Renewals become effective when  
23 tabs or emblems have been issued and properly displayed.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** This act takes effect July 1, 2017.

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