

TITLE 150: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

SUBCHAPTER 150-50.1

LICENSE PLATE FEES AND REQUIREMENTS RULES AND REGULATIONS

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Subchapter Authority: 1 CMC § 2507; 9 CMC § 1204.

Subchapter History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: PL 1-8, tit. 1, ch. 10, codified as amended at 1 CMC §§ 2501-2507, creates the Department of Public Safety (DPS) within the Commonwealth government, composed of a police force. See 1 CMC § 2501; see also PL 14-25 § 3 (effective Aug. 20, 2004) (amending 1 CMC § 2501). 1 CMC § 2504(f) authorizes the Department to inspect motor vehicles and enforce motor vehicle registration laws. 1 CMC § 2507 directs the Department to adopt rules and regulations regarding activities over which it has jurisdiction.

Title 9 of the Commonwealth Code sets forth the vehicle code for the CNMI. 9 CMC § 1201 creates a Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) within the Department of Public Safety. The BMV is authorized to administer the vehicle code and to develop rules and regulations necessary to carry out the administration of the laws vested in the Bureau for adoption by the Director of DPS. 9 CMC § 1204.

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On June 30, 1981, DPS published notice of proposed “Regulations Increasing the Driver License Fee.” The text of the proposed regulations was not published with the notice and a notice of adoption was never published. However, the notice stated: “If no comments have been received at the expiration of the Notice period provided herein, the said Regulations shall become effective without further Notice or publication.” See 3 Com. Reg. 1281 (June 30, 1981).

Public Law 15-29, the Motor Scooter Act of 2006 effective September 26, 2006, amended the definitions of moped and motorcycle and added a definition for motor scooter in 9 CMC § 1102. PL 15-29, among other things, addresses registration fees, operators’ licenses, lease and rental arrangements, and the application of traffic laws for the operation of motorcycles, mopeds and motor scooters. PL 15-29 specifically includes a motor scooter as a motor vehicle and sets forth penalties for violations of operation requirements. Vehicle is not defined in this subchapter. Presumably, the regulations in this subchapter apply to motor scooters as a motor vehicle pursuant to 9 CMC § 1102.

Public Law 18-22, effective October 8, 2013, amended 9 CMC § 2116 to reduce the issuance fee for a veteran license plate. To the extent that these regulations conflict with PL 18-22, they are superseded.

Part 001 - General Provisions

[Reserved.]

Part 100 - License Plates

§ 150-50.1-101 Issuance of License Plates

Upon registering a vehicle, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) shall issue to the owner two license plates. One plate shall be attached to the rear of the motor vehicle and one plate shall be attached to the front of the motor vehicle. These plates shall be kept clean and the numbers must be visible from a distance of fifty feet. Such plates shall identify the vehicles for which they are issued for the period of their validity.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(e).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The Commission created the section titles in part 100.

§ 150-50.1-105 Display of Registration and Year Number

Every license plate shall have displayed upon it the registration number assigned to the vehicle for which it is issued together with the word “CNMI” and the year number for which it is issued or a suitable device issued by the DPS BMV for validation purposes, which device shall contain the year number for which issued.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

§ 150-50.1-110 License Plate Shape and Size

License plates shall be rectangular in shape and such size as the Director DPS may determine.

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Upon originally registering a vehicle and an annual re-registration of such vehicles the Bureau shall issue to the owner suitable plates or devices indicating such annual registration which shall be attached to the vehicle as provided in this subchapter.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(d).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

§ 150-50.1-115 General and Individual Distinguishing Numbers

The Department shall also issue such plates as applied for which shall have displayed thereon the general distinguishing number assigned to the applicant. Each plate or pair of plates so issued shall also contain a number or symbol identifying the same from every other plate or pair of plates bearing a like general distinguishing number.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

§ 150-50.1-120 License Plate Attachment and Visibility

Every license plate shall at all times be securely fastened to the vehicle for which it is issued so as to prevent the plate from swinging, and at a minimum distance of twelve inches from the ground in a position to be clearly visible. Every license plate shall be maintained free from foreign materials and in a condition to be clearly legible.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(e).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Part 200 - License Plates; Government Officials

§ 150-50.1-201 License Plates; Government Officials

(a) In carrying out the issuance of license plates pursuant to the provisions of 9 CMC § 2 [9 CMC, division 2], the Director DPS shall issue special licenses bearing the following designations to the following officials of the CNMI government for use on their privately-owned vehicles, or to those persons expressly authorized by the Director of Public Safety.

Office Plate	Designation
Governor	Governor
Lieutenant Governor	Lieutenant Governor
Senate President	Senate President
Speaker	Speaker
Senators	Senator
House of Representatives	House of Representatives
Judges	Judge

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Washington Representative
Mayor

Washington Representative
Mayor

(b) The foregoing licenses shall be issued to those entitled thereto upon their assumption of the office in question. Such licenses shall be surrendered to the BMV upon their removal from said office for any cause. Nothing herein contained shall be construed as authorizing the waiver of the local registration and licensing requirements for such vehicles and their respective owners nor of preventing the issuance of special CNMI plates to the official government-owned vehicles assigned to any public officer.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The original paragraphs were not designated. The Commission designated subsections (a) and (b). It appears that the reference to 9 CMC § 2 in subsection (a) was intended to refer to title 9, division 2 of the Commonwealth Code, "Registration and Licenses."

Part 300 - Personalized License Plates

§ 150-50.1-301 Application

Any person who is the registered owner or lessee of a passenger vehicle, commercial vehicle, or trailer registered with the DPS BMV or who makes application for an original registration or renewal registration of any such vehicle may, upon payment of the fee prescribed in 9 CMC § 2104 apply to the DPS BMV for personalized license plates in the manner prescribed in § 2101 which plates shall be affixed to the passenger vehicle, commercial vehicle, or trailer for which registration is sought in lieu of the regular license plates.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The Commission inserted a comma after the word "vehicle" pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(g).

§ 150-50.1-305 Color and Design

The personalized license plates shall be the same color and design as regular passenger vehicle, commercial vehicle, or trailer license plates, and shall consist of numbers or letters, or any combination thereof not exceeding seven positions provided that there are no conflicts with existing passenger, commercial, trailer, motorcycle or with the provisions of this subchapter.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(d), (e).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The Commission inserted a comma after the word "vehicle" pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(g).

§ 150-50.1-310 Personalized License Plates; Defined

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“Personalized license plates,” as used in this part means license plates that have displayed upon them the registration number assigned to the passenger vehicle, commercial vehicle, or trailer for which such registration number was issued in a combination of letters and/or numbers, as applied for by the owner or lessee of the vehicle.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(d), (g).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The Commission moved the comma after “plates” inside of the closing quotation mark. The Commission inserted a comma after the word “vehicle” pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(g).

§ 150-50.1-315 Issuance

Personalized license plates shall be issued only to the registered owner or lessee of the vehicle on which they are to be displayed.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

§ 150-50.1-320 Form and Date of Application; Letters and Numbers

An applicant for issuance of personalized license plates or renewal of such plates in the subsequent year pursuant to this part shall file an application therefore in such form and by such date as the DPS BMV may require indicating thereon the combination of letters and/or numbers requested as a registration number. There shall be no duplication of registration numbers, nor of personalized license plates.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(d).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

§ 150-50.1-325 Transfer Fee

Whenever any person who has been issued personalized license plates applies to the DPS BMV for transfer of such plates to another passenger vehicle, commercial vehicle, or trailer, a transfer fee of twenty-five dollars shall be imposed in addition to all other appropriate fees.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(e), (f).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The Commission inserted a comma after the word “vehicle” pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(g).

§ 150-50.1-330 Transfer or Surrender of Plates

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When any person who has been issued personalized license plates sells, trades, or otherwise releases ownership of the vehicle upon which the personalized license plates have been displayed, he shall immediately report the transfer of such plates to an acquired passenger vehicle, commercial vehicle, or trailer pursuant to 9 CMC § 2103 or he shall surrender such plates to the DPS BMV forthwith.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The Commission inserted commas after the words “trades” and “vehicle” pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(g).

§ 150-50.1-335 License Plates; Devices in Lieu of

The DPS Chief of BMV may issue one or more stickers or other suitable devices in lieu of the license plates provided under the regulations in this subchapter.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(e), (d).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Part 400 - Dealer(s)

§ 150-50.1-401 Special Dealer Plates

A dealer or distributor owning any vehicle of a type otherwise required to be registered under 9 CMC § 2 [9 CMC, division 2] may operate or move such vehicle upon the highways solely for the purpose of testing, demonstrating, repairing, delivering, servicing, storing, or selling such vehicle without registering it upon conditions that there be displayed on the vehicle a special plate or plates issued to such owner.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The Commission created the section titles in part 400. It appears that the reference to 9 CMC § 2 was intended to refer to title 9, division 2 of the Commonwealth Code, “Registration and Licenses.”

The Commission inserted a comma after the word “storing” pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(g).

§ 150-50.1-405 Application for Special Dealer Plates

A dealer or distributor applying for a special dealer plate or plates shall make written application to the Department of Public Safety setting forth such information, and accompanied by such proof of his status as a bona fide dealer or distributor as may reasonably be required by the Department.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

§ 150-50.1-410 Dealer Plates; Numbering; Use

Upon granting any application, the Department shall issue to the applicant a certificate listing the dealer plate or plates assigned to the applicant. Dealer plate or plates shall be numbered in a separate numerical series and bear a suitable mark or symbol. Such plate or plates shall be used only for the purpose described herein.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

§ 150-50.1-415 Attachment Requirement; Exceptions

Every license plate shall remain attached during the period of its validity to the vehicle for which it is issued except as otherwise permitted by law with reference to special plates issued to a dealer or distributor, and except plates issued for vehicles which are exempt from payment or registration fees, or plates which bear other distinguishing marks or symbols when such vehicles are no longer entitled to plates bearing distinguishing marks or symbols. This section shall not apply to plates which the Department has ordered to be surrendered or transferred to another vehicle or removed.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(d).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

§ 150-50.1-420 Unauthorized Use of License Plates

The Director of Public Safety shall take possession of any vehicle which has a license plate or special plate attached thereto, which license plate or special plate was not issued for such vehicle. Such license plate or special plate, unless shown to have been stolen, shall be revoked by the Director of Public Safety. The vehicle shall be returned to its owner after the payment of all fees and penalties provided for by this 9 CMC § 2 [9 CMC, division 2] and payment has been received by the Director of Public Safety for any and all costs incurred for the taking into possession and storage of the vehicle.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(g).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: In the second sentence, the Commission inserted the word “plate” after “special” to correct a manifest error. It appears that the reference to 9 CMC § 2 was intended to refer to title 9, division 2 of the Commonwealth Code, “Registration and Licenses.”

Part 500 - Fees

§ 150-50.1-501 Payment Type

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Payments for registration fees and license plates may be made by the applicant's personal or company check or U.S. Postal Service money order or cash which shall be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer and may be mailed to the Department of Finance, CNMI Treasurer.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(f).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The Commission created the section title.

§ 150-50.1-505 Fees

Registration fees shall be paid to the Director of Finance, through the Division of Revenue and Taxation, corresponding to the itemized fee schedule pursuant to 9 CMC § 2104.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: Section 8(a)(2) of PL 16-02 (effective May 3, 2008) increased vehicle registration fees by 100%. The Department promulgated new regulations to implement this increase, codified at subchapter 150-50.7. To the extent this section conflicts with subchapter 150-50.7, it is superseded.

§ 150-50.1-510 Additional Fee Schedule

The following specialized registration and license plate charges shall apply as expressly authorized by the Director of Public Safety. These charges are in addition to fees provided for under 9 CMC § 2104.

- (a) Personalized \$ 75.00
- (b) Sample (collector's plate) \$ 75.00

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(f).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The original paragraphs were not designated. The Commission designated subsections (a) and (b). The Department promulgated new regulations to implement this increase, codified at subchapter 150-50.7. To the extent this section conflicts with subchapter 150-50.7, it is superseded.

§ 150-50.1-515 Fees for Commercial Vehicles

(a) All motor vehicles used for commercial purposes shall pay a fee(s) in addition to those provided for in 9 CMC § 2104 as follows:

- Taxi \$25.00
- Dealer \$200.00
- Trailers and Low Boys \$25.00
- Trucks \$100.00

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Buses \$25.00

(b) Commercial motor vehicle shall be defined as those vehicles operated primarily for business and/or industry as contrasted with a personal, pleasure or family vehicle.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The original paragraphs were not designated. The Commission designated subsections (a) and (b).

The Commission created the section title. The Commission inserted a comma after the word “pleasure” in subsection (b) pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(g).

Section 8(a)(2) of PL 16-02 (effective May 3, 2008) increased vehicle registration fees by 100%. The Department promulgated new regulations to implement this increase, codified at subchapter 150-50.7. To the extent this section conflicts with subchapter 150-50.7, it is superseded.

§ 150-50.1-520 Expiration of Registration; Renewal

All new registrations or renewals issued under 9 CMC § 2101 shall expire one year from the original date of registration at midnight. Upon application to the DPS BMV and payment of the fee(s) provided for in 9 CMC and this subchapter, the person to whom any such plate were issued may obtain a new plate or device, as specified by the Director of Public Safety, indicating registration for the coming year.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(d), (e), (g).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The Commission changed “was” to “were” to correct a manifest error. The Commission created the section title.

§ 150-50.1-525 Transfers by Operation of Law

Whenever the title or interest of an owner in or to a registered vehicle shall pass to another otherwise than by voluntary transfer, the registration shall expire and the vehicle shall not be operated upon the highways unless and until the person entitled to possession of such vehicle shall apply for and obtain the registration thereof.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(g).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: The Commission changed “an until” to “and until” to correct a manifest error.

§ 150-50.1-530 Certificate of Loss, Etc.

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Whenever application is made to the DPS BMV for a transfer or registration of a vehicle to a new owner or legal owner and the applicant is unable to present the certificate of ownership or registration card issued for such a vehicle by reason of the same being lost or otherwise not available, the Department may receive such application and investigate the circumstances of the case and may require the filing of affidavits or other information, and when the Department is satisfied that the applicant is entitled to a transfer of registration, the Department may transfer the registration of such vehicle, or re-register such vehicle under a new registration number, and issue a new certificate of ownership and registration card to the person or persons found to be entitled thereto.

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

§ 150-50.1-535 Penalty

A penalty fee will be charged for those motor vehicles operating on the highway(s) whose registration has expired in excess of ten working days. The penalty fee for expired registrations will be \$50.00.

Modified, 1 CMC § 3806(e).

History: Adopted 10 Com. Reg. 5736 (Nov. 15, 1988); Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5655 (Aug. 15, 1988); Emergency and Proposed 10 Com. Reg. 5572 (June 15, 1988) (effective for 120 days from May 19, 1988).

Commission Comment: Section 8(a)(2) of PL 16-02 (effective May 3, 2008) increased vehicle registration fees by 100%. The Department promulgated new regulations to implement this increase, codified at subchapter 150-50.7. To the extent this section conflicts with subchapter 150-50.7, it is superseded.