

COLORADO MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE PLATES

A Publication of the Office of Legislative Legal Services¹

The Colorado Department of Revenue (the "Department") issues motor vehicle license plates for every motor vehicle designed to be operated on the public highways of this state. The most common plates are briefly described below.

- **Standard motor vehicle license plates.** Owners of passenger motor vehicles who pay the annual registration fee will be issued the standard green and white plates. Registration fees are based upon the age and weight of the vehicle. § 42-3-201 and §§ 42-3-304 through 42-3-306, C.R.S.
- **Optional license plates.** The law requires these plates to have a graphic design representing the state flag of Colorado as the background. The Department limits the letters and numbers on the plates. A \$35 fee is charged in addition to the registration fee, and an additional \$25 annually upon renewal. § 42-3-212, C.R.S.
- **Personalized license plates.** These plates have the same color and design as standard or optional plates, and each plate is limited to seven characters. The Department charges a \$35 fee for the first personalized license plate, and \$25 annually upon renewal, in addition to the annual registration fee. § 42-3-211, C.R.S.

The Department also issues the following special plates:

- **Colorado National Guard members.** Active and retired members of the National Guard who submit a proof of eligibility form prescribed by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs are eligible for these plates. They cost the same as standard motor vehicle license plates except for a one-time \$25 fee. § 42-3-218, C.R.S.
- **Military honor license plates.** These plates are available to purple heart recipients, former prisoners of war, medal of honor recipients, military valor award recipients, survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and disabled veterans, for whom the first plate is free. Families of fallen soldiers; honorably discharged or retired veterans of the U.S. armed forces; active, honorably discharged, or retired Marines, Army, Navy; Army special forces, Air Force,

¹ This summary contains information commonly requested from the Office of Legislative Legal Services (OLLS). It does not represent an official legal position of the General Assembly or the State of Colorado and does not bind the members of the General Assembly. It is intended to provide a general overview of Colorado law as of the date of its preparation. Any person needing legal advice should consult his or her own lawyer and should not rely on the information in this memorandum.

or U.S. Coast Guard members, bronze star medal recipients; and veterans of the Korean and Vietnam wars can also obtain special plates. A one-time fee of \$25 is imposed upon the issuance of the first license plate of these types and for additional plates of all types. § 42-3-213, C.R.S.

- **Fallen service members.** Certain relatives of fallen service members may obtain a fallen service member special license plate. The fallen service member plate is exempt from the additional \$25. §42-3-213, C.R.S.
- **Persons with disabilities.** Identifying plates and placards are available to those who submit verification from a physician licensed in Colorado that their ability to move from place to place is substantially limited. Similarly, any person with a temporary disability may receive a temporary placard. There is no additional charge for a special license plate, and the placard is issued at cost. § 42-3-204, C.R.S.
- **Collectors'** license plates may be issued to the owners of vehicles that the Department deems to be collector vehicles because of an early date of manufacture or design or historical interest. There is a \$12.50 charge for each five-year registration period. § 42-3-219, C.R.S.
- Certain license plates are available to people who make contributions at specified levels or pay dues to certain organizations. Such plates are available for an additional fee. These plates include:
 - **U.S. Olympic Committee** plate § 42-3-215, C.R.S.
 - **Alumni association** license plate § 42-3-214, C.R.S.
 - **Special agriculture and natural resources** license plate § 42-3-216, C.R.S.
 - **American Indian** license plate §42-3-217, C.R.S.
 - **Denver Broncos** license plate §42-2-221, C.R.S.
 - **Support public education** license plate § 42-3-222, C.R.S.
 - **Support the troops** license plate § 42-3-223, C.R.S.
 - **Colorado Kids First** license plate § 42-3-224, C.R.S.
 - **Share the Road** license plate §42-3-225, C.R.S.
- Other special license plates are available to particular groups for an additional fee, such as:
 - **Italian-American** license plate §42-3-225, C.R.S.
 - **Breast cancer awareness** license plate §42-3-217.5, C.R.S.

The above listing of license plates is not exhaustive. For instance, holders of radio and television licenses are entitled to a set of special license plates bearing the call sign letters of their station. (§ 42-3-210, C.R.S.) In addition, members of the U.S. Congress from the state of Colorado and members of the state legislature may obtain license plates that display their office. (§ 42-3-209, C.R.S.)

Complete information about all license plates can be found in article 3 of title 42 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. Additional information concerning motor vehicle license plates and registration can be obtained from county motor vehicle offices.

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