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Texas Department of Motor Vehicles

HELPING TEXANS GO. HELPING TEXAS GROW.



The Texas Classic FAQs

Why are we getting a new general-issue license plate?

To give you a clean, simple and easy-to-read design that meets the highest public safety standards. The new general-issue plate, The Texas Classic, is white with black lettering, and features the Lone Star, state silhouette, and the “The Lone Star State” slogan.

The Texas Classic offers several benefits:

- Enhanced security features.
- Optimum readability for law enforcement.
- Increased size of the plate number.
- Black and white plates look good on any color vehicle.

This new design also changes the passenger vehicle number pattern – three letters followed by four numbers – that will make it easier to remember your license plate number.

The plate number is also increased with the letters and numbers now a full inch wide and just over 2 ½ -inches tall.

Why did you change from the current multi-color, general-issue plate to black and white?

There are almost 22 million registered vehicles in Texas and the majority of them have general-issue plates. The primary purpose of any license plate is to

enhance public safety. We believe the general-issue plate should meet the highest standards for public safety, and The Texas Classic does that. We introduced the colorful Lone Star Texas plate in 2009, which was chosen in an online vote. Since then, we have heard from Texans and law enforcement that the plate number is not always easy to read.

Some citizen witnesses who observed a crime called us to say they just couldn't catch the seven-character plate number because of the busy design, and we heard the same thing from law enforcement officers, who are professionally trained to read plate numbers. Other Texans complained the current plate colors clashed with their vehicle color. The Texas Classic is the solution to these concerns.

So are the current general-issue plates unsafe?

No. They just aren't as easy to read.

What are the security features?

The Texas Classic is being manufactured with the security features we always had in place plus two security threads embedded in the license plate sheeting. Texas is the first state in the country to use dual security threads.

The threads, which run vertically through the plate, allow law enforcement to determine it's an official state plate from a greater distance. This added feature makes it virtually impossible to counterfeit our plates.

The plate number is also increased with the letters and numbers now a full inch wide and just over 2 ½ -inches tall.

Is there a truck version of this plate?

No, and that's actually good news for light truck owners. Their plates will now show "TEXAS" as big as passenger vehicles. Adding "Truck" on a plate forced a reduction in the size of the state name, limiting whether truck owners could place a license plate frame around the plates. State law does not allow "Texas" to be completely covered by a plate frame.

I want these plates. Can I trade my current plates for these?

Please don't. To save taxpayer money and avoid waste, counties must exhaust their existing stock of plates before issuing The Texas Classic. General-issue plates are part of your registration fee, but there is an additional charge for replacement plates. Even if you purchase a new car tomorrow chances are you will receive the current red, white and blue Lone Star Texas plates. It may take a full year before all of the state's 254 counties begin issuing The Texas Classic.

But I don't like this design. Can I keep the one I have now?

Yes, if your license plates are less than seven years old. You are required to replace your general-issue plates every seven years due to loss in reflectivity. In fact, if your general-issue plates are less than seven years old you should keep them until it is time for a replacement.

We know there is no such thing as one perfect plate that will make every vehicle owner happy. With almost 22 million registered vehicles in Texas, it is unlikely that we can please everyone's taste with the general-issue plate.

However, Texans have a variety of plate design choices. You can order specialty plates from the TxDMV that benefit non-profit causes or My Plates, the specialty plate marketing vendor. The most popular design sold by My Plates is a black and white plate while the top-selling plate ordered from the TxDMV is the State of the Arts design, which resembles the Texas flag.

What about multi-colored specialty plates? Are they safe?

Yes. As part of the rollout of the new general-issue plate, the TxDMV has issued new license plate specs for multi-colored plates that prohibit the design from encroaching into the area reserved for the plate number. New specialty plates also will feature the advanced security threads.

Who designed The Texas Classic plate?

The TxDMV designed the plate to make sure it meets the legibility and reflectivity needed by Texas law enforcement.

What does "law enforcement legibility" and "safety reflectivity" mean?

One of TxDMV's main goals is to enhance public safety and license plate legibility and reflectivity helps us meet that goal.

Legibility is the ability to clearly read a plate's letters and numbers.

Reflectivity allows the plate to be seen from a long distance at night, and is helpful in locating cars on dark roads or that may have driven off the road into vegetation.

Motor vehicles are used in 70 percent of all serious crimes in the United States, according to the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The primary method of finding these vehicles – and the people who are driving them - is the license plate number.

Who makes our license plates?

The plates are made by offenders at the Wynne Correctional Unit in Huntsville. TxDMV contracts with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to manufacture license plates.

How many license plates does the TxDMV manufacture?

The Huntsville prison facility manufactures more than 40,000 Texas license plates each week day, using more than 2 million pounds of aluminum every year.