

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



July 18, 2024

## TEMPORARY LICENSE PLATES

The purpose of this Information Bulletin (IB) is to provide guidance regarding the enforcement and verification of temporary license plates (TLP) issued when a vehicle is purchased from a dealership. In addition to placing the report of sale (ROS) on the lower corner of the passenger side windshield, when a vehicle, new or used, is sold by a dealer and the vehicle does not display California license plates, the dealer is required to issue one or two TLPs depending on the type of vehicle.

Dealership-issued TLPs expire 90 days from the date of sale. The driver or registered owner of a vehicle may be cited for Sections 5201(b) and/or 5202(a) of the California Vehicle Code (CVC) if the TLPs are not replaced upon receiving the permanent license plates from the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The registered owner is also required to destroy the dealer-issued TLPs once the permanent license plates have been installed upon the vehicle.

Dealers are required to utilize a synthetic paper acquired from their system provider which meets the DMV standards for printing TLPs. All dealer-printed TLPs should include a watermark which features a silhouette of the State of California in the background and a QR Code. Additionally, a legitimate TLP will display a TLP number, ROS number, vehicle identification number, vehicle year, vehicle make, and expiration date. Refer to Figure 1.



Figure 1. Sample TLP.

Dealers are required to issue TLPs, properly attach them, and ensure they are displayed in accordance with the provisions of Section 5200 CVC before the vehicle leaves the dealership. This requirement includes the provision to issue two (front and rear) TLPs when required. If a TLP is damaged, lost, or stolen, the registered owner must return to the dealership that sold the vehicle, and request a reprint or replacement.

The DMV has instructed dealers to securely attach TLPs to vehicles using all four corner perforations to prevent swinging and flapping. The driver or registered owner of a vehicle may be cited for violating Section 5201(a) CVC if the vehicle is operated upon the highway with an improperly secured TLP.

A TLP database is accessible to authorized California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) users. Typically, TLP records are available within CLETS two days after the vehicle is sold. When a database return indicates a TLP record-not-on-file message, verify the vehicle's date of sale is at least 90 days prior to the expiration date. A date of sale and an expiration date which are not separated by 90 days is a possible indication of a fraudulent TLP. A record-not-on-file message could also indicate a sale has been voided or rolled back after the TLP was issued.

When required information is missing on a TLP or suspected to be false, and when a record-not-on-file return is received from the TLP database, a vehicle displaying the suspected fraudulent TLP should be investigated in the same manner as any other vehicle which displays other types of false registration indica.

Questions regarding this IB should be directed to Commercial Vehicle Section, at (916) 843-3400.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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