
Wisconsin Legislative Council

ACT MEMO



Prepared by: David Moore, Senior Staff Attorney

April 18, 2022

2021 Wisconsin Act 163 [2021 Senate Bill 429]

Construction and Issuance of Motor Vehicle Registration Plates

2021 Wisconsin Act 163 requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to begin issuing new registration plates constructed according to specified design criteria and also begin replacing motor vehicle registration plates, on a rolling basis, with registration plates constructed according to these criteria.

Under the act, beginning with registrations initially effective July 1, 2022, all registration plates issued by DOT must be constructed with aluminum plates tempered to a specified hardness and thickness and prismatic sheeting with embedded security features. The registration plate sheeting must be of a type successfully used by the manufacturer in multiple jurisdictions and meet specified criteria for reflectivity. The act also raises the fee to replace a registration plate that becomes illegible or is lost or destroyed from \$2 per plate to \$4 per plate.

Additionally, the act requires DOT, beginning with registrations initially effective July 1, 2022, to issue and deliver two new registration plates constructed in accordance with the above specifications upon receipt of a completed application to renew the registration of a vehicle for which a registration plate has not been issued during the previous 10 years. When a person renews the registration of a vehicle for which new plates are required, the person must pay a fee of \$4 per plate for the new plates and must destroy the replaced plates. The act provides that DOT may issue replacement registration plates in a time frame it determines, but must complete the issuance of new registration plates no later than July 1, 2032.

Effective date: The act generally takes effect on July 1, 2022. The provision requiring DOT to begin replacing registration plates with new registration plates takes effect either on the date the Joint Committee on Finance approves ongoing funding for the issuance of new registration plates or on July 1, 2023, whichever is earlier.

DM:jal