

The Public Safety and Homeland Security Needs for Retro-Reflective Front and Rear License Plates with Validation Stickers

Submitted by: Highway Safety Committee
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WHEREAS, heightened homeland security concerns emphasize the need for fast and reliable identification of vehicles by law enforcement officers and citizens alike, which is extremely important for law enforcement officers who steadfastly patrol the more than 25 million miles of highways and roads globally; and

WHEREAS, motor vehicles are used in the majority of all serious crimes committed in the United States and the quick discovery of such vehicles can help solve these crimes; and

WHEREAS, in addition to improving safety, traffic enforcement activities have proven to be invaluable in the detection and apprehension of individuals involved in terrorist and/or criminal activities; all means of initial identification, including retro-reflective front and rear license plates, are essential; and

WHEREAS, retro-reflective front and rear license plates are essential in the quick and accurate identification of motor vehicles traveling toward or away from a law enforcement officer, even at highway speeds, whether the officer is using Automated License Plate Reader technology or reliant on personal observance; and

WHEREAS, retro-reflective front and rear license plates serve as a significant safety device, warning motorists of the presence of vehicles that are disabled or that otherwise lack sufficient headlights or taillights and allowing those vehicles to be observed at a safe distance and in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, fully reflective validation tabs displaying month and year attached to the license plate provides law enforcement officers with an instant recognition system of valid vehicle registration; and

WHEREAS, an effort to repeal the requirement for front license plates and/or validation tabs are sometimes made in response to budgetary or other non-safety centric considerations; and

WHEREAS, if such efforts are successful, they would have a serious and negative effect on the ability of law enforcement officers to effectively identify vehicles or invalid vehicle registrations and to initiate reasonable suspicion vehicle stops; and

WHEREAS, it is important to keep license plates legible and to maintain their retro-reflectivity because they are relied upon by law enforcement and citizens alike for public and traffic safety. Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) recognizes that the efficient and reliable identification of vehicles is a critical element of national, state and local safety and security, supports the issuance of retro-reflective front *and* rear license plates with clearly identifiable registration numbers and states of registration, and urges issuance of new plates prior to retro-reflective degradation and as otherwise required to maintain effective vehicle identification; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the IACP supports the issuance of retro-reflective validation tabs indicating the month and year for use on the license plates of all motor vehicles registered to operate on public highways and roadways; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the IACP supports the use of the License Plate Standard for the design and manufacture of license plates published by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.