



Vehicle registration & licensing

Licence plates – behind the characters

Licence plates help to easily identify motor vehicles and trailers by:

- giving quick access to the owner's name and information collected during vehicle registration and licensing
- indicating by a decal if licence and insurance have been purchased
- showing operating limits set out in the vehicle licence.

What's new?

Easier-to-read motorcycle licence plates will be available in May 2011. The licence numbers are 3/8th of an inch larger and the new plate features the current provincial government logo.



old motorcycle licence plate



new motorcycle licence plate

A motorcyclist displaying the older-style licence plate doesn't have to exchange it for a new one.

Display

To ensure plate numbers can be seen properly, regulations set out that licence plates must be:

- securely fastened to the vehicle in a horizontal position
- unobstructed and free from dirt or foreign material, so numbers and letters may be plainly seen and read at all times, and accurately photographed using a speed-monitoring or traffic-light safety device
- unobstructed by bicycle racks and bicycles carried or any other equipment temporarily attached to a vehicle
- not repainted or altered in any way.

While most vehicles operating on a highway must display a valid licence plate, there are exceptions:

- vehicles displaying a valid temporary operation permit
- road construction equipment within a highway project
- insured implements of husbandry
- a vehicle being towed on a highway by a vehicle designed or used primarily for towing or rendering assistance to other vehicles
- motorized wheelchairs
- motor assisted electric pedal bicycles & tricycles.



Surrender, theft, transfers and police reports

When a person cancels their licence and insurance or replaces licence plates with another set, they need to give their previous number plates to an ICBC Autoplan broker for return.

If a licence plate with validation decal has been lost or stolen, ICBC requires a police report case number prior to issuing replacement plates. Even when replacement plates are not needed, ICBC requires people to report such theft or losses to law enforcement. This is for licence plate inventory security and for our customer's own protection — the missing plates could be used later to be displayed on an unlicensed or uninsured vehicle or used during the commission of a crime.

When a vehicle is sold or otherwise transferred to another person, the licence plates need to be removed and retained by the seller. If the seller has acquired another vehicle of the same class (commercial, passenger, motorcycle, trailer), then the seller may display the licence plates on that substitute vehicle for up to 10 days. To continue operating beyond those 10 days, the vehicle transfer transaction must be completed at an Autoplan broker.

The 10-day period only applies if the substitute vehicle is already registered in B.C. or the substitute vehicle was purchased from a dealer and provided that the motorist carries:

- the purchaser's copies of the duly completed *Transfer/Tax Form (APV9T)*
- the purchaser's *Owner's Certificate of Insurance and Vehicle Licence* valid for the transferred original vehicle
- the previous owner's *Certificate of Registration for the substitute vehicle* or bill of sale if the vehicle was purchased from a dealer.

Sometimes a vehicle seller will forget to remove their licence plates from a vehicle they've sold and the purchaser continues using the vehicle without going to an Autoplan broker to transfer the vehicle into their name. In these situations, even when the seller cancels their licence and insurance linked with those licence plates, any parking tickets, violations tickets or other sanctions will continue to accrue to the seller as the vehicle's last registered owner on record.

In such cases, the onus is on the seller to show the sale date to prove their responsibility for the vehicle ended. That's why a police report citing when the seller lost possession of the licence plates is helpful.

Seizure

Law enforcement officers or commercial vehicle inspectors may seize licence plates that are:

- detached from a motor vehicle or trailer
- displayed on a motor vehicle or trailer other than the one for which it was issued, or
- required to be surrendered by the MVA, the MVAR or a direction of ICBC.

This authority to seize licence plates applies whether the number plates and motor vehicles are on a highway or elsewhere. It allows law enforcement to enter land or premises without warrant where there's a motor vehicle or trailer. However, it doesn't apply to dealers' number plates (demonstration plates) when used as permitted under the act or to number plates detached under the regulations.

Souvenirs and samples

For people who want a B.C. licence plate as a collectible item, ICBC offers a regular licence plate with the characters "SAM PLE" for \$22.40.

Customers who were issued 2010 Winter Games licence plates and want to retain them as a collector item when cancelling their vehicle licence and insurance or when substituting a non-2010 Winter Games plate on their vehicle can retain one plate from each set issued to them (an Autoplan broker will need to apply a souvenir label over the decal if that's the plate being retained).



All other B.C. licence plates are ICBC property and remain our property even after they're issued for display on a vehicle. If not in use, such plates should be returned to us or destroyed. However, old licence plates with expired validation decals which can no longer be displayed on a vehicle are often retained by collectors and bought and sold as collectors' items. We acknowledge that such licence plates are difficult to confuse with valid licence plates and don't insist that they be returned or seek to limit their trade or sale.

Licence plate guides

Both numeric and alpha characters are used on licence plates. B.C. licence plates are made in two sizes: 5x8 inches for motorcycles, utility vehicles and utility trailers, and 6x12 inches for all others vehicle types.

There are 24 different plate designs (e.g. standard, personalized or restricted.) Further differentiation is achieved by character configuration designations for the class of the vehicle that the licence plate is displayed upon (e.g. "X" prefix on industrial vehicle plates). The plate design or character configuration may indicate operational limitations associated with the vehicle licence (e.g. demonstration, repairer, farm, restricted plates).

Appendix 1 contains a *B.C. Licence Plate Identification Guide* (form MV1675) which gives an example of each B.C. licence plate type.

Appendix 2 highlights how each licence plate relates to vehicle classes, owner groups, vehicle licence operating limits and includes reference to governing legislation or regulation.

Legislation and regulations

Motor Vehicle Act, Section 2 – Application of act (motorized wheelchairs, implements of husbandry, tow cars)

Motor Vehicle Act, Section 12 – Number plate design

Motor Vehicle Act, Section 13 – Offences (seize a number plate)

Motor Vehicle Act, Section 51 – ...if number plate lost

Motor Vehicle Act, Section 74 – Alteration and use of fictitious number plates...

Motor Vehicle Act Regulations, Division 3 – Display and Use of Number Plates

Motor Vehicle Act Regulations, Division 14 - Temporary Operation Permits

Commercial Transport Act, Section 5 – Act not to apply to some road building machines

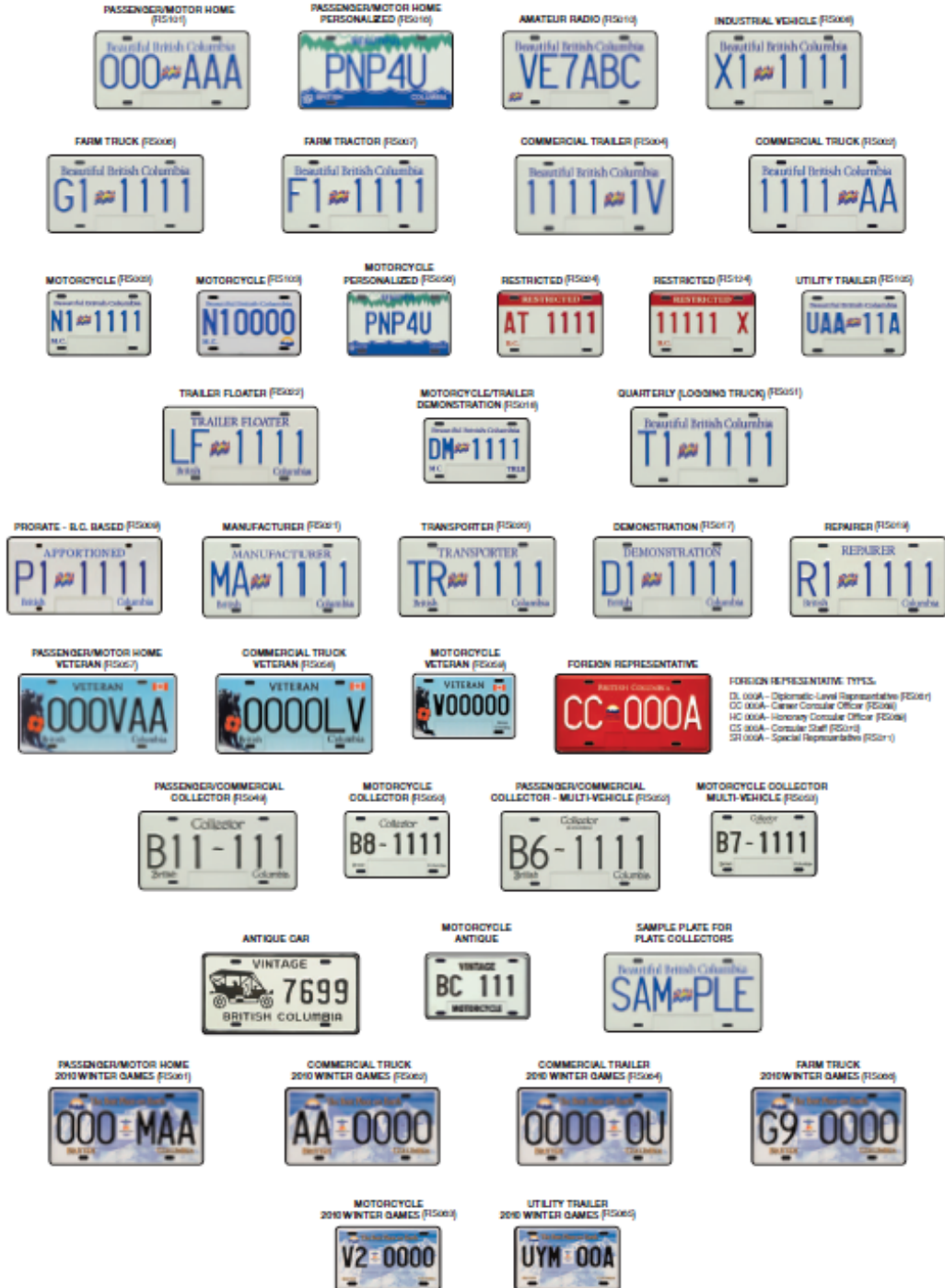
Contact

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Appendix 1 Licence Plate Poster

ICBC BC Licence Plate Identification Guide





Appendix 2 - Licence Plate Descriptions

Licence plate	Format	Descriptions
Passenger / Motorhome	111 AAA (AAA 111 up to 2001)	For car, SUV, mini-van, motor home (and LSV subject to Div. 24 MVAR); pair 6x12; decal applied to rear plate; MVA s. 3
Commercial	1111 AA	For bus, taxi, limo, truck (incl. pickup), truck tractor, and cargo van (and farm or industrial tractor only if part of a fleet); pair 6x12; decal on rear unless GVW > 5,500 kg then front decal; CTA s. 6.
Motorcycle	N1 1111	Motorcycle, limited speed motorcycle, 3-wheel motorcycle; single 5x8 marked "M.C." at lower left; first letter in licence number may be other than "N"; MVA s. 3.
Trailer - Utility	UAA 11A or 111 111	For trailer GVW<1401 kg, or if not used for financial gain any recreational trailer (horse, auto, boat, motorcycle, snowmobile) with GVW >1401 kg, and house/human habitation trailers; single 5x8; MVA ss. 1, 3 & CTA s. 1
Trailer – Commercial	1111 1V	For trailer with GVW >1401 kg, semi-trailers; single 6x12; CTA ss. 1, 6 & MVA s.1.
Personalized (passenger, light truck and motorcycle)	>2 and <= 6 characters	For car, SUV, mini-van, motor home, motorcycle, commercial vehicle under GVW 5,500 kg; single 5x8 for motorcycle, pair 6x12 for others; decal applied to rear plate; MVAR Div. 34.
Farm Vehicle	G1 1111 A1 1111	For bus, truck (incl. pickup), truck tractor, cargo van with seats removed behind driver; vehicle owner must be a farmer; pair 6x12; decal on rear unless GVW > 5,500 kg then front decal; MVA s. 1, CTR Item 2(d).
Farm Tractor	F1 1111	For a motor vehicle that is owned by a farmer and that is designed and used primarily as an implement of husbandry for drawing agricultural equipment - does not include a vehicle used primarily to transport persons or property on a highway; pair 6x12; decal on rear unless GVW > 5,500 kg then front decal; MVA s. 8.
Industrial Vehicle	X1 1111	For tractor, grader, loader, shovel, roller, mixer, crane, backhoe, grader, excavator, and similar vehicles or a forklift; vehicle may only travel to and from a worksite without load but may carry attachments in vehicle bucket or loader; pairs 6x12; decal on rear unless GVW > 5,500 kg then front decal; MVA s. 10.
Restricted	AT 1111 11111 X	For golf cart, ATV, light tractors, forklift, mower and other utility vehicles, snowmobile, snow vehicle; vehicle operations are restricted - refer to <i>Restricted Plate Program Guide</i> (MV1445); single 5x8 marked "RESTRICTED"; MVAR Div. 24.
Veteran -passenger/motorhome -commercial -motorcycle	111 VAA 0000 LV V00000	For passenger vehicle, motorhome, motorcycle, commercial vehicle 5500 kg GVW or less, except golf cart, ATV, snowmobile, trailer, work utility & industrial vehicle; issued for vehicles owned or leased by an eligible veteran as determined by the BC Veterans Commemorative Association; pair 6x12 / single 5x8 m/cycle marked "VETERAN"; ICBC policy*
Foreign Representative	DL111A CC111A CS111A SR111A HC111A	For car, SUV, mini-van, motor home, bus, taxi, limo, truck (incl. pickup), truck tractor, and cargo van; these plates are issued if the vehicle may be used by the foreign representative, their spouse or dependent (the prefix indicates Foreign Affairs designation); pair 6x12 decal on rear unless GVW > 5,500 kg then front decal; MVFR Item 2(e)(i).
Collector -Passenger/Commercial -P/C Multi-vehicle (floater) -Motorcycle (M/C) -M/C Multi-vehicle (floater)	B11 111 B6 1111 B8 1111 B7 1111	For car, SUV, mini-van, motor home, bus, taxi, limo, truck (incl. pickup), truck tractor, cargo van, motorcycle; min. 15 year old vehicle in a condition that ICBC considers to be collectible; the licence is valid only on a qualifying vehicle under MVAR Div 22A that is used for pleasure only with no operation to or from work or school permitted; pair 6x12, single 5X8 for motorcycle marked "Collector"; decal rear plate; MVAR Div. 22A
Vintage (Antique) M/C Vintage	1111 BC 111	For motor vehicles 30 years old or older maintained with original or similar parts that are operated solely for exhibition or club activities, parades and similar events e.g. weddings, graduations, and funerals but not for compensation or commercial use, and not for use for general transportation but travel allowed to or from a place of repair or an approved inspection station.; pair 6x12 marked "VINTAGE", single 5X8 for motorcycle marked "VINTAGE MOTORCYCLE"; vintage plates remain with the vehicle not the owner when vehicle ownership is transferred; MVAR Div. 22
Amateur Radio (HAM)	VA7AA VA7AAA VE7AA VE7AAA	For car, SUV, mini-vans, motor homes, bus (11 people or more), taxi/limo, truck (including pick-ups), truck-tractor, cargo van; the licence is issued for amateur radio operator with a Certificate in Proficiency in Amateur Radio issued by Industry Canada and vehicle may contain a short wave radio, others may operate the vehicle; pair 6x12; ICBC policy*
Demonstration (floater)	D1 1111	For any vehicle type including motorcycle and utility trailer; may be attached to any unlicensed vehicle for purposes relating to the business of selling motor vehicles or trailers, including (i) demonstration use by customer (for up to 48 hours with written consent) and (ii) personal use by the licence holder, their salespeople and members of the licence holder's and salesperson's households, but not for any commercial purpose that is not directly related to the sale of the vehicle; single 6x12; marked "DEMONSTRATION" MVA s. 38 & 45
Demonstration - Motorcycle/Trailer (floater)	DM 1111	Only for motorcycle or trailer, same restrictions as regular demonstration plate; single 5x8 marked "M.C." at lower left & "TRLR" at lower right; MVA s. 38 & 48
Repairers (floater)	R1 1111	For any vehicle; for operation or towing by the owner of a repairer's garage (or detailer), or by their employee/agent, for rendering the customer the vehicle servicing related to the business; single 6x12 marked "REPAIRER"; MVA s.
Transporter (floater)	TR 1111	For any vehicle; for delivery of a vehicle only by the licensee or their authorized employee, or for up to 4 days by the purchaser of the vehicle or their authorized employee; vehicle must not be carrying freight for compensation single 6x12 marked TRANSPORTER"; MVA s. 41.
Manufacturer (floater)	MA 1111	For any vehicle must be operated by licensee or an authorized employee of the manufacturer for road test or delivery, or for up to 4 days by the purchaser of the vehicle or their authorized employee, or any person if authorized by the manufacturer to deliver a trailer; single 6x12 marked "MAUFACTURER"; MVA s. 42.
Trailer Floater	LF 1111	For commercial trailers, including semi-trailers, that are not otherwise licensed; single 6x12 marked "TRAILER FLOATER"; MVA s. 6(13).
Special Agreement	1111 SA	For vehicles operating on specified highways in Gold River / Tahsis area only; pair 6x12, CTR Div 12.
Quarterly Logging	T1 1111	For logging truck licensed GVW > 9,100 kg, transporting logs or poles in their natural state, with or without bark, or machinery & supplies used in connection with a logging operation; pair 6x12, decal on front; CTR Div. 5.
Prorate	P1 1111 11111 P	For commercial vehicle inter-jurisdictional travel under the International Registration Plan; pair 6x12 marked "APPORTIONED"; CTA s. 10.

* "ICBC policy" indicates these plates were designed and issued in accordance with MVA s. 12(1).



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