

# Vehicle Licensing Guide

## Deactivating and Reactivating Registration VLIC-4.105

**Original Date:** 10/20/1997

**Revision Date:** 07/01/2024

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POLICY	
<b>Title:</b> Deactivating and Reactivating Registration	
<b>Effective Date:</b> October 20, 1997	<b>Revision Date:</b> July 1, 2024
<b>Authority:</b> Code of Virginia §§ <a href="#">46.2-613</a> , <a href="#">46.2-646.1</a> , <a href="#">46.2-649</a> , <a href="#">46.2-706</a> , <a href="#">46.2-707</a> , <a href="#">46.2-714</a> and DMV Surrender Plate Policy dated August 15, 1997.	
<b>Policy:</b> DMV will deactivate a registration for a motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer upon request by the vehicle owner. Once deactivated, the vehicle may not be lawfully driven on Virginia highways. DMV will reactivate deactivated registrations for a motor vehicle, trailer, or semi-trailer (expired or unexpired) upon request by the vehicle owner. <b>&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;REVISION</b> Customers reactivating deactivated registrations are required to submit insurance information. <b>END</b> <b>REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b> An <a href="#">administrative fee</a> is collected for each unexpired registration reactivated, regardless of the date of deactivation.	
<b>Exceptions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Registrations expired at time of reactivation are exempt from paying the reactivation administrative fee.</li><li>• Vehicles registered under the International Registration Plan (IRP) cannot be deactivated or reactivated in the CSC.</li><li>• Customers who are leasing a vehicle must submit a power of attorney from the leasing entity (lessor) with language that allows for the deactivation or reactivation of the registration.</li><li>• Customers reactivating a deactivated registration to allow for transfer of the license plates to a different vehicle are NOT required by the system to provide insurance information, pay the administrative fee, or comply existing vehicle stops. <b>&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;REVISION</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CSC management or designee may authorize an administrative override in the system to allow a registration be reactivated without the customer providing insurance information, complying existing vehicle stops on the record, or paying the administrative fee in the following 4 situations ONLY: <b>END</b> <b>REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Registration was deactivated in error,</li><li>○ License plates are surrendered for a registration refund after the registration was deactivated (6 months or more remain in the registration period).</li><li>○ License plates are voluntarily surrendered (no refund) after the registration was deactivated (less than 6 months remain in the registration period).</li><li>○ License plates require reactivation in order to be relinquished to a new owner in accordance with <a href="#">VLIC-4.420</a> (i.e. vintage plates, personalized plates, etc.).</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>	

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### OVERVIEW

#### Deactivating a Vehicle Registration:

When currently registered vehicles are parked (or garaged) and not being used on the highway for a period of time, the vehicle owner may request DMV to deactivate their registration without physically surrendering the license plates and decals.

Customers may deactivate a vehicle's registration for reasons including, but not limited to:

- The vehicle is parked and not in use for extended periods of time,
- The vehicle is in the shop for repairs,
- Vehicle insurance coverage is cancelled,
- Active duty military members, government contractors, or others are stationed outside Virginia,
- Other reasons.

#### <<<<<REVISION

During the time the registration is deactivated, the owner shall not be required to carry bodily injury liability insurance or property damage insurance.

Vehicles with deactivated registrations may not be operated lawfully on any highway in Virginia.

No fee is charged to deactivate a motor vehicle, trailer, or semi-trailer registration. **END REVISION>>>>>**

#### **Reactivating A Vehicle Registration:**

Customers may request DMV to reactivate their deactivated vehicle registration provided that:

- The registration is unexpired, or expired for 9 months or less and the record is still available in DMV's system (for purged registrations, process as an original registration in accordance with [VLIC-4.000](#)),
  - Before issuing new license plates, check the customer record. If the customer still has in their possession the last issued production or personalized license plates, they can continue using them provided the plates are:
    - Expired for less than 12 months,
    - The last set of plates issued in the system.

#### <<<<<REVISION

- Customer provides the minimum liability insurance provider's name/National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) code and policy number (verbally or in writing). **END REVISION>>>>>**

An [administrative fee](#) is charged automatically by the system for reactivating **unexpired** registrations.

#### <<<<<REVISION

The system will not require proof of insurance to reactivate the following vehicle registration types, or in other situations where insurance requirements are monitored by other programs (i.e. SR22/FR44 insurance):

- Antique/Vintage permanent
- For hire
- For rent
- Government owned vehicles
- Mopeds
- Permanent plates
- Plates being transferred
- Trailers
- Registrations for federal government, fire/rescue, public use, medical, and red cross vehicles titles as tax exempt

**END REVISION>>>>>**

#### **Registration Deactivation/Reactivation Service Options include:**

- Customer Service Center (CSC)
- Phoning DMV Direct
- DMV Select
- Online at DMVNow.com
- Mailed to Titling Work Center or Special Registration Work Center at Headquarters

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#### **CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS – DEACTIVATING/REACTIVATING REGISTRATION**

1. Applicant must be the owner or co-owner of the vehicle, or present a power of attorney granting legal authority to act for the owner.
2. Request deactivation or reactivation of a vehicle registration.
3. For leased vehicles, present power of attorney granted by the leasing entity (lessor) to the applicant who is leasing the vehicle with language that allows for the reactivation or deactivation of the registration.
  - Written permission granted to the lessee from a leased vehicle's owner/lessor to transfer license plates and registration, as required in [VLIC-4.130](#), is acceptable to allow CSCs to reactivate a deactivated registration to allow the system to transfer the plates.
4. Provide the following (if applicable):

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- a. Proof of insurance by providing the name/NAIC code and policy number for the minimum liability insurance provider (verbally or in writing). **END REVISION>>>>**
- b. Payment of the [administrative fee](#), if applicable.
  - o No fee is charged by the system to deactivate a registration.
  - o No administrative fee is charged by the system to reactivate an **expired** registration.
  - o No administrative fee is charged by the system to reactivate plates for transfer to a different vehicle.

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## FRONT COUNTER CSR – DEACTIVATING/REACTIVATING REGISTRATION

1. Verify that the applicant is the owner or co-owner of the vehicle or has power of attorney granting legal authority to act for the owner.
  - a. Verify the vehicle owner's identity, or
  - b. If requested by an agent for the owner, review the power of attorney to ensure legal authority is granted to deactivate/reactivate the registration (photocopy is acceptable) and return it to the customer.
    - o For leased vehicles, the lessee (party paying to lease the vehicle) must submit a power of attorney from the lessor with language that allows for the reactivation or deactivation of the registration.
      - Written permission granted to the lessee from a leased vehicle's owner/lessor to transfer license plates and registration, as required in [VLIC-4.130](#), is acceptable to allow CSCs to reactivate a deactivated registration to allow the system to transfer the plates.
2. Inquire on the vehicle record to:
  - Verify the owner's customer number and ownership of the vehicle before deactivating/reactivating the registration,  
OR  
Verify the identity of the individual/agent submitting the deactivation/reactivation request to ensure they are one and the same as the person granted authority on the power of attorney document, and then return the power of attorney to the applicant.
  - Verify that the registration is unexpired, or expired for less than 9 months.
    - o For registrations expired for more than 9 months, process an original registration in accordance with [VLIC-4.000](#).
    - o Before issuing new license plates, check the customer record. If the customer still has in their possession the last issued production or personalized license plates, they can continue using them provided the plates are:
      - Expired for less than 12 months,
      - The last set of plates issued in the system.
  - Identify any existing stop conditions on the vehicle record that could stop the reactivation and/or renewal of the registration in the future.
    - o For Law Enforcement Services (LES) stops:
      - a. Call LES at one of the phone numbers below:
        - (804) 367-1678
        - (804) 367-1997
      - b. Provide LES with any required information,
      - c. LES will:
        - Review the stop,
        - Determine if the issue can be resolved and the stop complied while the customer waits,
        - Notify the CSR that the stop is resolved, or that it cannot be resolved while the customer waits and provide next steps.
  - Provide the customer with a Customer Return form with steps required to comply any stop(s) on the record (for vehicle stops, refer to [VLIC-4.445](#)).
3. **To Deactivate the Registration:**
  - a. Deactivate the vehicle registration in the system following data entry guidelines.

- No fee is charged to deactivate a registration.
- b. Advise the customer of the following:
  - While deactivated, it is unlawful to drive the vehicle on Virginia highways. Vehicles driven on Virginia highways with deactivated registrations may be cited by law enforcement.

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- To reactivate the registration, customer will be required to provide DMV with the name/NAIC code of the insurance provider and policy number. **END REVISION>>>>>**
- Character combinations on personalized plates will become available to the public if not reactivated and renewed within 9 months of the registration expiration date.
- An [administrative fee](#) will be charged for reactivation if the registration period is still valid (unexpired).
- Customers who reactivate **expired** registrations may avoid transaction late fees by renewing the registration within 30 days of the date of reactivation.

**4. To Reactivate the Registration:**

- a. Enter the insurance provider name/NAIC code and policy number provided by the customer (either verbally or in writing) into the system (if applicable),
  - i. Inquire on the list of insurance company NAIC codes in the system if the customer does not know the NAIC code.
  - ii. Verify the insurance provider with the customer before entering the NAIC code to ensure the correct NAIC code is selected.

**<<<<<REVISION**

**IMPORTANT:** Keying the incorrect NAIC code could result in an insurance monitor notice being sent to the customer. Advise customers who are unsure of their provider to contact their insurance company and return with the correct information to ensure the correct NAIC code is entered in the system. **END REVISION>>>>>**

- b. Request authorization from the CSC manager or designee for an administrative override in the following 4 situations ONLY:
  - Registration was deactivated in error,
  - License plates are surrendered for a registration refund after the registration was deactivated (6 months or more remain in the registration period).
  - License plates are voluntarily surrendered (no refund) after the registration was deactivated (less than 6 months remain in the registration period).
  - License plates require reactivation in order to be relinquished to a new owner (i.e. vintage plates, personalized plates, etc.).
- CSC management or designee will do the following:
  - i. Review the transaction to ensure the reactivation is required due to one of the 4 situations above.
  - ii. Authorize the override in the system (if applicable) according to data entry guidelines, exempting the customer from:
    - Providing insurance company name/NAIC code and policy number,
    - Complying with any existing vehicles stops for reactivation, and
    - Paying the administrative fee.
  - iii. Process the administrative override, exempting the customer from complying with the reactivation requirements.
- c. Reactivate the registration in the system.
  - Ask the customer if the plates are being reactivated for transfer to another vehicle,
  - Indicate in the system that the license plates will be transferred following data entry guidelines,
    - Plates being reactivated for transfer to a different vehicle are not required by the system to provide insurance information, pay the administrative fee, or comply vehicle stops.
  - For existing stop conditions on the record, issue a Customer Return form outlining requirements for complying the stop(s) (refer to [VLIC-4.445](#)).
- d. Collect the [administrative fee](#) (when applicable):

- Administrative fees are not collected for:
    - Expired registrations, or
    - Registrations reactivated using the administrative override.
    - Registrations reactivated for transfer to a different vehicle.
- e. Reissue license plates or decals, if required, in accordance with [VLIC-4.115](#).
- f. Renew the reactivated vehicle registration, if applied for by the owner, in accordance with [VLIC-4.110](#).
  - Registrations renewed within 30 days of the date of reactivation are exempted from paying the transaction late fee automatically by the system.

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## DMV CONTACT CENTER ACTIONS

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- DMV Contact Center Agents are authorized to deactivate and reactivate registrations. (Refer to [Front Counter CSR](#) steps for processing.) **END REVISION>>>>>**
- Customers are not required to pay the fee, provide insurance information, or to comply existing vehicle stops in the 4 situations listed below. Request authorization from DMV Contact Center manager for an administrative override of these requirements when reactivating registrations for the 4 reasons below:
  - To correct vehicle registrations that were deactivated in error,
  - Customer surrenders license plates for a registration refund after the registration was deactivated (6 months or more remain in the registration period).
  - Customer voluntarily surrenders-license plates (not eligible for refund) after the registration was deactivated (less than 6 months remain in the registration period).
  - License plates require reactivation in order to be relinquished to a new owner (i.e. vintage plates, personalized plates, etc.).

**NOTE:** Administrative overrides are authorized in the system by DMV Contact Center managers (see [Administrative Overrides](#) above) and are used to waive reactivation requirements ONLY in the 4 situations listed above.

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## POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Antique and other permanent license plates may be deactivated by CSCs in the system and do not have to be sent to Special Registration Work Center at Headquarters.
- Customers reactivating antique and other permanent license plates will pay the administrative fee and are no longer required to pay for new license plates when reactivating the registration.
- Customers who choose to deactivate a vehicle's registration are not eligible for a refund of the registration fees. For customers who request a registration refund after having deactivated the registration:
  - a. Request CSC management or designee to process an administrative override in the system to allow reactivation of the registration (see [Administrative Overrides](#) above), and
  - b. Process registration refund in accordance with [VLIC-4.705](#).

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- A registration may not be reactivated once a plate surrender/refund has been processed. **END REVISION>>>>>**
- Insurance information, administrative fee, and compliance with existing vehicle stops is not required by the system for registrations and license plates being reactivated for transfer to a different vehicle. The CSR or DMV Direct agent must indicate that the plates are being reactivated for transfer at the time of reactivation following data entry guidelines.
- Customers who deactivate a vehicle registration, then reactivate during the current registration period, may retain the same license plates and decals for the remainder of the current registration period.
- Customers who reactivate a vehicle registration after the expiration date must renew the registration and receive updated decals before driving with the same license plates.

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## CONTACT

For additional information contact:

- Your CSC Manager/Assistant Manager
- DMV Contact Center Help Desk at (804) 367-6646
- VSA/[Titling Work Center](#)/[Special Registration Work Center](#)

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