

# Vehicle Licensing Guide

## Tow Truck License Plates VLIC-4.270

**Original Date:** 06/17/1999  
**Revision Date:** 01/01/2018

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<b>POLICY</b>	
<b>Title:</b> Tow Truck License Plates	
<b>Effective Date:</b> June 17, 1999	<b>Revision Date:</b>
<b>Authority:</b> §§ <a href="#">46.2-100</a> , <a href="#">46.2-649.1</a> , <a href="#">46.2-697</a> and <a href="#">46.2-703</a>	
<b>Policy:</b> DMV will issue license plates to tow trucks based upon how the vehicle is operated (interstate or intrastate) and its operation type (for-hire or private use).	
<b>Exception:</b> Customers requiring International Registration Plan (apportioned) license plates must be issued by the Motor Carrier Services work center. (Refer to <a href="#">VLIC-6.005</a> )	

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### DEFINITIONS

#### Private Use

A motor vehicle designed for the transportation of property, operated as such by the owner or lessee for his convenience, not for compensation.

#### For-Hire

A motor vehicle designed for transportation of property, used for such by the owner or lessee, for compensation.

#### International Registration Plan (IRP)

An international agreement under which a carrier's base state/jurisdiction or Canadian province collects vehicle registration fees for other member jurisdictions based on the percentage of miles a fleet operates in the various jurisdictions. The terms of the agreement are binding for the participating jurisdictions. The agreement covers heavy vehicles that operate on an interstate basis. Vehicles required to register under the IRP are referred to as apportioned vehicles. Under the terms of the agreement the definition of an apportioned vehicle excludes vehicles displaying restricted plates. A restricted plate as defined by the IRP agreement includes plates that have a time, geographic area, distance, or commodity restriction.

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### ELIGIBILITY

Tow trucks may be registered for use solely within Virginia, or both within and outside Virginia. Tow trucks may also be registered based on how it will be used; For Hire or Private.

If the vehicle is to be operated across state lines (Interstate), it can be registered with Tow Truck For-Hire license plates or with IRP apportioned license plates.

Some states will allow a Virginia tow truck to operate within their state with Tow Truck For-Hire license plates. However, it is possible that IRP apportioned plates will be required by West Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania. If IRP apportioned license plates are necessary or desired, you must then determine if the vehicle will be used (a) for compensation (For-Hire) or (b) not for compensation (Private Use).

#### <<<<<REVISION

Truck For-Hire and Truck Private plates are discontinued as of January 1, 2018. New license plates have been developed for use in place of the Truck For-Hire and Truck Private Plates (see table below).

Discontinued Truck Plates		New Truck Plates	
Old Plate Name	Old Plate Type	New Plate Name	New Plate Type
Truck Private	TKP	Truck	TK2
Truck For Hire	TKH		
Truck Private Perm	TKPPM	Truck Perm	TKPM2
Truck For Hire Perm	TKHPM		
Truck Private HP	TKPHP	Truck HP	TKHP2

**EXCEPTION:** Until existing inventories are depleted, continue issuing the Truck for-hire “H” and Truck private “P” plates, unless the customer specifically asks for plates without the “H” and “P” designators.

**NOTE:** No changes have been made to the “Tow Truck” for-hire plates.

Because the system does not automatically default to “H” plates when registering for-hire vehicles, the CSR must key into the system the appropriate for-hire plate type codes for the plate type being issued. **END REVISION>>>>**

For tow truck plate options, refer to the table below. For a complete list of registration requirements and fees, refer to the [Tow Trucks/Wreckers Registration Options](#) table.

	For Hire		Private	
Operates	Tow Truck Eligibility Requirements	Plate Options <sup>1,2,3</sup>	Tow Truck Eligibility Requirements	Plate Options
Intrastate (Within VA)	Under 10,000 lbs.	<<<<<REVISION Truck Plates <sup>4</sup>	N/A	Truck Plates <sup>4</sup> (Regardless of weight) <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>
	10,000 lbs. and over	Tow Truck For Hire, or Truck Plates <sup>4</sup>		
<sup>1</sup> Tow trucks MUST have a GVWR/GCWR or registered Gross Vehicle Weight of 10,000 lbs. or more to be eligible for Tow Truck For-Hire (TW) plates. <sup>2</sup> Permanent plates are available for customers who do not wish to display decals. <sup>3</sup> Personalized plates are available. <<<<<REVISION <sup>4</sup> Continue to issue Truck For-Hire and Truck Private plates to eligible tow trucks, even though discontinued, until existing inventories are depleted, UNLESS a customer specifically requests one of the new plates without the “H” or “P” designator, then issue the new plate type. <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>				

	For Hire		Private	
Operates	Tow Truck Eligibility Requirements	Plate Options <sup>1,2,3,4</sup>	Tow Truck Eligibility Requirements	Plate Options
Interstate (Within VA & at least one other jurisdiction)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 axles</li> </ul> <<<<<REVISION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GVWR/GCWR or registered GVW is under 10,000 lbs. <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b></li> </ul>	<<<<<REVISION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truck Plates<sup>5</sup> with Trip Permit, or <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b></li> <li>• IRP Apportioned plates (optional)<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 axles</li> <li>• GVWR/GCWR or registered GVW of 26,000 lbs. or less</li> </ul>	<<<<<REVISION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truck Plates<sup>5</sup>-with Trip Permit, or</li> <li>• IRP Apportioned plates (optional)<sup>2</sup> <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 axles</li> </ul> <<<<<REVISION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GVWR/GCWR or registered GVW is 10,000 to 26,000 lbs. <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tow Truck For-Hire (TW), or</li> </ul> <<<<<REVISION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truck Plates<sup>5</sup> with Trip Permit, or <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b></li> <li>• IRP Apportioned plates (optional)<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 axles</li> </ul> <<<<<REVISION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GVWR/GCWR or registered GVW of 26,001 lbs. or more <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b></li> </ul>	IRP Apportioned plates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 axles</li> </ul> <<<<<REVISION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GVWR/GCWR or registered GVW is 26,001 pounds or more <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tow Truck For-Hire (TW), or</li> <li>• IRP Apportioned plates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 or more axles, regardless of vehicle gross weight</li> </ul>	IRP Apportioned plates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 or more axles, regardless of vehicle gross weight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tow Truck For-Hire (TW), or</li> <li>• IRP Apportioned plates</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A
<sup>1</sup> Tow trucks must have a GVWR/GCWR or registered gross vehicle weight of 10,000 or more to be eligible for Tow Truck For-Hire (TW) plates. <<<<<REVISION <sup>2</sup> Some states do not allow operation by a tow truck with a Virginia TW plate or Truck plates. Customer should contact Motor Carrier Services (804) 249-5130 for questions about obtaining apportioned (IRP) trip permits from a trip permit issuance agency. <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b> <sup>3</sup> Permanent plates are available for customers who do not wish to display decals. <sup>4</sup> Personalized plates are available. <<<<<REVISION <sup>5</sup> Continue issuing Truck For-Hire and Truck Private plates to eligible tow trucks, even though discontinued, until existing inventories are depleted, UNLESS a customer specifically requests one of the new plates without the “H” or “P” designator, then issue the new plate type. <b>END REVISION&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>				

**PERMANENT PLATES:**

A customer has the option to purchase permanent plates without month and year decals for trucks or tractors with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) or Gross Combined Weight Rating (GCWR) of 26,001 lbs. or more.

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It is important to note that the customer will be billed annually or bi-annually for his/her registration fees. **END REVISION>>>>**

To prevent a billing notice from being mailed, permanent plates must be surrendered to DMV and the system record MUST be updated to show the plates surrendered. The customer may also purchase personalized plates, both permanent and non-permanent for all trucks and tractors, regardless of weight, for \$10.00 annually. This includes IRP vehicles (Apportioned plates).

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## CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS

1. Determine the intended use of the vehicle and desired registration. (Refer to [Tow Trucks/Wreckers Registration Options](#) table.)
  - o Tow truck owners/operators may use their tow truck to perform either private or for-hire operations and operate either Intrastate (solely within Virginia) or Interstate (use the vehicle to do business outside of Virginia). Depending upon the intended use of the vehicle, tow truck owners/operators have different registration options.
    - “Tow Truck License Plates” can only be issued to tow trucks that perform for hire operations.
2. Obtain proper Commercial Liability Insurance Coverage.
  - o For-Hire tow trucks must have the following insurance coverage at the time of registration and operation:
    - ◀◀◀◀**REVISION**
      - \$750,000 Commercial Liability Insurance Coverage, for vehicles with a GVWR of 10,000 pounds or more,  
OR  
\$300,000 Commercial Liability Insurance Coverage, for vehicles with a GVWR under 10,000 pounds.  
AND
      - \$50,000 Cargo Liability Insurance Coverage **END REVISION**>>>>
  - o Private tow trucks must have \$70,000 in coverage.
3. Submit a completed Vehicle Registration Application ([VSA-14](#)), or if vehicle is not titled, submit an Application for Certificate of Title and Registration ([VSA 17A](#)).
4. Determine if operating authority is required. (Refer to [Tow Trucks/Wreckers Registration Options](#) table for detailed requirements.)

Type of Operation	Operating Authority Required	“VA” Operating Authority NOT Required	Operating Authority NOT Required
Private Tow Truck (Intrastate)			✓
Private Tow Truck (Interstate)		✓ (May be required in other states)	
For-Hire Tow Truck (Inter & Intrastate)	✓		

5. Obtain Operating Authority,
  - a. Obtain required insurance (Form E certificate of insurance must be filed with DMV by the insurance carrier).
  - b. Complete the For-Hire Intrastate Operating Authority Permit Application (for [OA142](#)).
  - c. Submit the form by mail to Motor Carrier Services.

OR

Operate under lease to a person that holds Operating Authority. If they operate under a lease, they must:

- a. Complete a For-Hire Vehicles Registration Request ([MCS 115](#)). (Refer to [VLIC-4.220](#))
- b. Submit the form by mail to Motor Carrier Services.

**NOTE:** The MCS 116 can be used as:

- i. A reference to ensure the carrier’s existing lease contains the mandatory legal lease requirements, or
- ii. The actual lease agreement. (If the customer completes and submits this form with their application.)

6. Determine if the customer requires International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) credentials. (Refer to [Tow Trucks/Wreckers Registration Options](#) table.)
  - Vehicles that have 2 axles and a gross vehicle weight (i.e., the maximum weight of the vehicle and its load) or registered gross vehicle weight of more than 26,000 pounds;
  - Vehicles that have 3 or more axles regardless of weight; or
  - Vehicles that are used in combination, when the combined weight is more than 26,000 pounds gross or registered gross vehicle weight.

**NOTE:** For requests to change empty weight, GVWR, or GCWR, follow guidelines in [VLIC-4.520](#).

7. Submit appropriate fees.

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### FRONT COUNTER CSR

1. For vehicles not yet titled in Virginia, process a title transaction in accordance with [VLIC-3.230](#).
2. Review the completed Vehicle Registration Application ([VSA-14](#)) or Application for Certificate of Title and Registration ([VSA-17A](#)).
3. Verify that the customer is aware of the insurance requirements for the class of vehicle they are registering (refer to [Tow Trucks/Wreckers Registration Options](#) table).
4. Determine if the customer needs operating authority. (Refer to [Tow Trucks/Wreckers Registration Options](#) table.)
  - o Private Tow Truck (Intrastate Only) does NOT need operating authority.
  - o Private Tow Truck (Interstate) does NOT require operating authority
  - o For-Hire Tow Truck (Intrastate or Interstate) must have operating authority.
5. Verify the customer has an active Motor Carrier *Operating Authority* Certificate/Permit number, if operating authority is required.
  - o For-Hire Tow Truck customers must have operating authority. If they do not, *DO NOT process the For-Hire Tow Truck license plate*. Inform the customer they must either:
    - Obtain Operating Authority (Refer to [VLIC-4.220](#)), or
    - Operate under lease to a person that holds Operating Authority. If they operate under a lease, they must:
      - i. Submit a completed For-Hire Vehicles Registration Request, ([MCS 115](#)) to Motor Carrier Services. (Refer to [VLIC-4.220](#)), and
      - ii. Provide the legal lease agreement, OR a Motor Carrier Motor Vehicle Lease Agreement ([MCS 116](#)).

**NOTE:** The MCS 116 can be used as:

  - a. A reference to ensure the carrier's existing lease contains the mandatory legal lease requirements, or
  - b. The actual lease agreement. (If the customer completes and submits this form with their application.)
6. Determine if the customer requires International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) credentials. (Refer to [Tow Trucks/Wreckers Registration Options](#) table.)
  - Vehicles that have 2 axles and a gross vehicle weight (i.e., the maximum weight of the vehicle and its load) or registered gross vehicle weight of more than 26,000 pounds;
  - Vehicles that have 3 or more axles regardless of weight; or
  - Vehicles that are used in combination, when the combined weight is more than 26,000 pounds gross or registered gross vehicle weight.
7. Complete the registration transaction.
  - For CSCs and DMV Select Offices that do not have tow truck plates in stock:
    - o <<<<<REVISION
    - o Issue multi-use (30-day) synthetic paper (MUPOD) license plates according to procedure [VLIC-4.225](#). **END REVISION**>>>>>
8. Collect applicable fees.
9. Prepare documents with correct barcode coversheet and place in appropriate area for document preparation.

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### DMV CONTACT CENTER ACTIONS

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Motor Carriers with vehicles registered under this section must be covered with Commercial Liability Coverage of at least \$750,000 for vehicles with a GVWR of 10,000 or more, and \$300,000 for vehicles with a GVWR that exceeds 7,500 pounds, but does not exceed 10,000 pounds. Customers may need to speak with a Motor Carrier representative. You may transfer them to Motor Carrier Services or customers may call directly (804) 249-5130. **END REVISION**>>>>>

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## POINTS TO REMEMBER

- If the tow truck is a rollback, it may require Cargo Liability Insurance coverage depending on their type of property permit.
- If the vehicle is to be operated across state lines, it can be registered with Tow Truck For-Hire license plates or with IRP apportioned license plates. Some states will allow a Virginia tow truck to operate within their state with Tow Truck For-Hire license plates. International Registration Plan (IRP) apportioned plates MAY be required by West Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania.
- The applicant bears the burden of proof as to the vehicle's eligibility for the license plates applied for at the weight stated on the application (§ [46.2-694](#)). For requests to change empty weight, GVWR, or GCWR, follow guidelines in [VLIC-4.520](#).

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## CONTACT

For additional information contact :

- Your CSC Manager/Assistant Manager
- DMV Contact Center Help Desk at (804) 249-5130
- VSA/[Titling Work Center](#)
- Motor Carrier Services at (804)-367-6646

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