

Motor Vehicle Advisory

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TO: All Law Enforcement Officials

FROM: Raymond P. Martinez, Chairman and Chief Administrator
New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission

DATE: February 21, 2014

SUBJECT: **Language to Accompany Notice of Temporary
License Plate “Not on File” Initiative**

Introduction

As you know, the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) currently administers a temporary license plate system. This system is in place to allow for new and used car dealers to provide immediate, valid temporary vehicle registration status for a vehicle immediately upon the completion of its sale to a customer. The temporary license plate, which is constructed of fortified paper, is designed for placement on the vehicle pending the procurement of the permanent registration and license plates. The resident temporary registration is valid for 30 days. The non-resident temporary registration is valid for 20 days. The law requires that the registered owner remove and destroy the temporary license plates and replace them with the permanent plates upon their receipt. Relatively recently, the MVC established the means by which authorized users of the temporary license plate information data base, including law enforcement agencies, can search for registration information. These searches can be done in real time, with no delay in obtaining the response. The comprehensive response includes the registrant's name, address, and the vehicle make, model, and year, VIN and the registration expiration date. The response from authorized users to this real-time search enhancement has been overwhelmingly positive.

A Recent Issue

Unfortunately, we have identified fraudulent use of temporary license plates. Fraudsters are artificially reproducing the temporary license plates bearing the registration numbers of legitimate vehicle registrants and then incurring E-ZPass and parking violations in the names of these legitimate registrants. These violations continue to occur long after the legitimate temporary registration has expired in the MVC system. The MVC has been working with E-ZPass, law enforcement and parking authorities in an effort to address this situation. The following solution is the apparent best means of mitigating this problem.

The Resolution

The MVC has resolved to block the real time search capability for the temporary registration information, commencing 10 days after the temporary registration expires in the system or 10 days after it is voided (whichever comes first). The result will be that after this period of time has elapsed, the temporary registration information will be blocked from access and a response of “not on file” will be provided to the inquiry. Registration information for those expired license plates will be available only manually via contact with the MVC by calling (609) 984-5279, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Practical Result

When an inquiry returns a “not on file” response, the inquiring agent is put on notice that one of the following circumstances exists:

- 1) The license plate is expired but legitimately registered to that vehicle;
- 2) The license plate is expired and not legitimately registered to that vehicle;
- 3) The license plate is counterfeit and was not issued by the MVC;
- 4) **THE VEHICLE MAY BE STOLEN.** *If that registration was legitimately issued to that vehicle, and the vehicle and registration were properly reported stolen to law enforcement, it should return with an active stolen alarm in NCIC. If the license plate was stolen from another vehicle and placed on that vehicle and the license plate was properly reported stolen to law enforcement, the license plate should return with an active stolen alarm in NCIC. However, it is certainly possible that the license plate has been placed on a stolen vehicle and the plate is not in NCIC. In all cases, law enforcement should act with due caution.*

