



Texas Department of Motor Vehicles

HELPING TEXANS GO. HELPING TEXAS GROW.

Personalized License Plate Guidelines and Restrictions

Texans are proud of our distinctive character. Since 1965, one of the ways we reveal our character is with our personalized specialty license plates. The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) is happy to keep this tradition going, and we hope you have fun with your plates. To help, we offer the following guidelines.

1. How to create your personalized plate

Use any combination of alphanumeric characters, spaces, and symbols including: hyphens, periods, hearts, stars, or silhouettes of the state of Texas. Be aware that the number of characters allowed on a license plate varies depending on the plate design. If you include the International Symbol of Access, you will reduce the number of characters you can display on your plate by two. Some plates, such as military and university plates, display a logo. The logo position is stationary and cannot be moved. Your personalized license plates must be unique, and no two Texans may have the same alphanumeric characters on their plates. If your online submission is returned with an “unavailable” response, it means TxDMV made the pattern unavailable or it is already in use. Simply try another combination to create your personalized plate.

2. Why TxDMV may decline your personalized plate

The process of applying for a personalized plate will be easier if you know the review rules beforehand. TxDMV reviews your personalized plate pattern before your plates are manufactured and considers how the public may view your plate. TxDMV does not consider your meaning or intent because the public will not know this information. There are several reasons why TxDMV may decline a requested personalized plate pattern.

- 1) The pattern conflicts with a current or proposed pattern featured on other license plates issued by the state.
- 2) The pattern is considered objectionable or misleading or could be viewed directly or indirectly as:
 - A. Indecent, including a reference to a sexual act; sexual body parts; excretory or bodily fluids or functions; or a “69” format not used in combination with a vehicle make;
 - B. Vulgar (swear or curse words);
 - C. Derogatory (words that belittle, demean, or disparage any person, group, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, or associated with an organization that advocates such expressions);
 - D. Referring to race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, whether the reference is derogatory or not;
 - E. An illegal activity (including gangs, violence, implied threats of harm, or expressions that describe, advertise, advocate, promote, encourage, glorify, or condone violence, crime or unlawful conduct);
 - F. An illegal drug or a controlled substance, or the physiological state produced by such substances, intoxicated states, or expressions that describe, advertise, advocate, promote, encourage, or glorify such items or states;
 - G. A representation of, or reference to, law enforcement, military branches, or other governmental entities and their titles. This includes any reference or acronym for law enforcement, military branches, public or official governmental office, position, or status; or law enforcement or military rank or status. A personalized plate pattern that refers to a publicly or privately funded college or university is allowed.
 - H. A pattern set aside exclusively for use on military or other restricted use license plates (like DV for Disabled Veterans).

3. Laws and rules

The TxDMV will approve and decline applications for personalized license plates in accordance with the state laws below.

- A. License plates are issued according to Transportation Code Sections
§504.005, Design and Alphanumeric characters;
§504.0051, Personalized License Plates;
§504.008, Specialty License Plates;
§504.101, Personalized License Plates; and
§504.102, Personalization of License Plates.
- B. Personalized license plate alphanumeric characters, symbols and rules are clarified in Texas Administrative Code
TITLE 43 TRANSPORTATION
PART 10 TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES
CHAPTER 217 VEHICLE TITLES AND REGISTRATION
SUBCHAPTER B MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION
RULE §217.27, Vehicle Registration Insignia; and
RULE §217.45, Specialty License Plates, Symbols, Tabs, and Other Devices