

Impounded Plates: Frequently Asked Questions **Administrative License Plate Impoundment**

Why did the license plates get impounded?

License plate impoundment is required if the violation is:

- A violation of 169A.20 (Driving while impaired) , 169A.52 (license revocation for test failure or refusal) or [171.177](#) (revocation; search warrant) that is the second violation within 10 years
- A license disqualification under section [171.165](#) (commercial driver's license disqualification) resulting from a violation of section [169A.52](#) or 171.177 within ten years of a qualified prior impaired driving incident
- Any violation of section [169A.20](#), [169A.52](#), or 171.177 while having an alcohol concentration of twice the legal limit or more (.16 or greater) as measured at the time, or within two hours of the offense; A first time offense can qualify for plate impoundment in this circumstance.
- Any violation of section [169A.20](#), [169A.52](#), or 171.177 while having a child under the age of 16 in the vehicle if the child is more than 36 months younger than the offender even for a first offense. A child endangerment charge is not required for the plate impoundment to be effective. A first time offense can qualify for plate impoundment in this circumstance.
- A violation of section [171.24](#) (driving without valid license) by a person whose driver's license or driving privileges have been canceled under section [171.04](#), **Canceled Inimical to Public Safety (CANC-IPS)**

My license plates are impounded how do I obtain “Special Registration” (WX / Whiskey) plates?

If the license plates on your vehicles have been ordered impounded you may purchase Special Registration plates (AKA Whiskey plates, WX plates).

Special Registration plates allow anyone with a “VALID” or “LIMITED” license status to operate the vehicle.

These “special registration” plates may be obtained over the counter at any Motor Vehicle office or by mail (turnaround by mail may take 2 to 3 weeks):

DVS

Plate Impound

445 Minnesota St. Ste 166

St. Paul, MN 55101-5166

The cost of special registration plates is \$50.00 plus any registration tax due and a filing fee.

Court Ordered impound Special Registration plates: (If your plates have been ordered impounded by the Courts and permission to obtain Special Registration plates has been granted by the court (court paperwork must be presented) the cost is \$25.00 plus a filing fee.) Contact the Administrative Impound unit at 651-297-5034 for more information.

How long must I have Special registration plates on my car?

“Special Registration” plates issued due to an Administrative Impound situation must be displayed for at least one year from the date of incident. Additionally if the owner is also the violator, the owner’s driving privileges must also be fully reinstated, a “LIMITED” status still requires the display of Special Registration plates unless the violator is enrolled in ignition interlock. If the violator participates in the Ignition Interlock Device Program (IIDP) regular plates may be reinstated and displayed before the end of the impound period.

I bought Special registration plates but they have since been lost or damaged?

If Special Registration plates are lost, damaged, or stolen new WX plates may be issued at the same cost of standard replacement plates, currently \$15.50 plus filing fee. The \$50 plate fee is due upon initial application.

If the plates were again impounded by law enforcement due to another Plate Impound incident, the \$50.00 fee is due once more and the minimum one year time frame begins again.

I have “Special Registration” plates and my license is now valid, when may I get regular plates?

Special registration plates must be displayed for at least one year from the qualifying incident. After the one-year anniversary of the qualifying incident you may reinstate the vehicle and purchase regular plates (as long as all owners are valid) at any Deputy Registrar office by paying for registration renewal (if necessary), replacement plate fee, and a reinstatement fee for each vehicle under impound. (ID ONLY / CONAX/ RECORD ONLY are valid statuses) For more information contact Administrative Impounds at (651-297-5034).

If the violator participates in the Ignition Interlock Device Program (IIDP) regular plates may be reinstated and displayed before the end of the impound period.

I have “Special Registration” plates because someone else was driving my car (DUI or Driving After Inimical Cancellation), when may I get regular plates?

Special registration plates must be displayed for at least one year from the qualifying incident unless you qualify for relief with an administrative review. After the one-year anniversary of the qualifying incident you may reinstate the regular plates at any Deputy Registrar office by paying for registration renewal (if necessary), replacement plate fee, and a reinstatement fee for each vehicle under impound.

If the violator participates in the Ignition Interlock Device Program (IIDP) regular plates may be reinstated and displayed before the end of the impound period.

For more information contact Administrative Impounds at (651-297-5034).

I am subject to an Order of License Plate Impoundment and I have purchased another car may I get regular plates for the new vehicle?

While your license is revoked and your vehicles are subject to Plate Impound (the plate impound period is at least one year from the date of the qualifying incident) any vehicle purchased during the impound period will be required to display “Special Registration” plates.

If the violator participates in the Ignition Interlock Device Program (IIDP) regular plates may be reinstated and displayed before the end of the impound period.

I received an impound order, am I required to purchase WX (Special Registration) plates for all my vehicles?

For Violations that occur after August 1, 2023 only the vehicle driven at the time of violation is subject to plate impoundment.

For violations that occurred prior to August 1, 2023 you need to purchase WX plates when there is a need to operate the vehicle during the plate impound period. If the vehicle is not used during the time it is subject to license plate impoundment (in storage), you may apply for regular plates when the impound period is over; **and** your license is valid. You must pay reinstatement fee and purchase replacement plates for each affected vehicle when the impound period is over.

If the violator participates in the Ignition Interlock Device Program (IIDP) regular plates may be reinstated and displayed before the end of the impound period.

I wasn't driving my motorcycle when I was pulled over why is the plate impounded?

For Violations that occur after August 1, 2023 only the vehicle driven at the time of violation is subject to plate impoundment.

For violations that occurred prior to August 1, 2023 All motor vehicles, including motorcycles, mopeds, self-propelled RVs, farm trucks, collector vehicles, and pro-rate vehicles, solely or jointly owned, leased, or registered in the violator's name are subject to the plate impound order. These vehicles may not be operated without special registration plates during the plate impound period.

All vehicles will be subject to a reinstatement fee and must purchase replacement plates. You have 7 days from the date of qualifying incident to surrender the plates on all vehicles you own, co-own, or lease. Plates that are ordered impounded may not be used 7 days after the incident or the vehicles may be subject to physical impoundment.

If the violator participates in the Ignition Interlock Device Program (IIDP) regular plates may be reinstated and displayed before the end of the impound period.

Trailers, ATVs, Boats, Recreational Trailers and vehicles not registered or title in Minnesota are not affected by Plate impound, however qualifying violations that occur in a boat, on an ATV, or in another jurisdiction may qualify the driver for Plate Impoundment.

Vehicle Transfers:

The license plates of my vehicle have been impounded; I am selling the vehicle. What do I need to do?

A vehicle subject to Plate Impound or displaying Special Registration Plates may only be sold/transferred if:

- The vehicle is sold for valid consideration (fair market value); it is not acceptable to make a gift of the vehicle and a low purchase price must be documented with estimates of repairs from an auto repair business
- The new owner and the registered owner are not family or household members
- The new owner and the violator are not family or household members

Family or Household member is defined as:

- A parent, stepparent, or guardian;
- Spouse
- Son, Daughter, Stepson, Stepdaughter
- Any of the following persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption:
Brother, Sister, Stepbrother, Stepsister, First Cousin, Aunt, Uncle, Nephew, Niece, Grandparent, Great-Grandparent, Great-Uncle, Great-Aunt; Brother-in-Law, Sister-in-Law, Mother-in-Law, Father-in-Law
- Persons residing together
- Joint Owners
- Persons who regularly associate and communicate with one another outside of a workplace setting.

The new owner must complete and sign form PS31125 Section A & C attesting that:

- The new owner and the violator are not family or household members;
- The sale was for Valid Consideration
- The new owner understands that the vehicle is subject to an impoundment order and that it is a crime under section [169A.37](#) to file a false statement under this section or to allow the previously registered owner to drive, operate, or be in control of the vehicle during the impoundment period;

Some special transfer situations are:

- *In the case of a transfer due to a divorce; a transfer to remove the violator's name will be allowed if the divorce decree shows the car awarded as part of the settlement. No reinstatement fee is due.*
 - *Transfers to remove a co-owner who is not the violator are allowed*
 - *If the vehicle is being transferred to the violator, the transfer will be allowed, however the plate impound will remain.*
 - *If a vehicle is being transferred but does not meet the above criteria (i.e. vehicle being transferred to relative/ as a gift) the transfer may be allowed if the impound period is over (over one year from the date of incident and violator is valid) and the prior owner pays the reinstatement fee or new owner is willing to pay the reinstatement fees.*
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The violator who received the Plate Impoundment passed away, what do I need to do?

- If the violator/owner has passed away the impound period is no longer in effect and the vehicle may be transferred without payment of the \$50 reinstatement fee. Standard procedures to transfer still pertain (Surviving Spouse/ Affidavit of No Probate)
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I purchased a vehicle subject to Plate Impoundment and was informed that the purchase price was unacceptable, what do I need to do?

If the sale price listed is below fair market value, documentation must be presented to explain the low purchase price such as:

- Receipts for completed repairs and/or parts replaced
- Estimates of repairs from a licensed auto repair business
- A retail value estimate from a licensed automobile dealership on letterhead stationary
- Photographs that identify the vehicle and show body damage, rust, or overall poorer than average condition

(a Sales tax affidavit is not acceptable without actual receipts or estimates)

It does not matter if the vehicle qualifies for the “**minimum tax**” (vehicles over 10 years old and worth less than \$3000) it must be sold for “valid consideration”. For example: a 2005 vehicle would pay \$10.00 tax on a purchase price under \$3,000, however a purchase price of less than fair market value (determined by national sources.) must be justified by the methods above. *The customer must provide the purchase price of the vehicle; the Plate Impound unit does not provide the Fair Market value information.* Transfers are audited and questionable purchase prices may result in transfers being delayed or denied.

If a purchase price appears to have been altered in any way or a vehicle shows gift with a price written in afterward, proof of payment such as a copy of canceled check (front & back) will be required.

I bought a car before the prior owner’s violation why am I being asked for a purchaser’s statement? The title has the sale date written down.

If you bought the vehicle but did not submit the title to transfer prior to the violation you will be required to submit the purchaser’s statement or provide documentation to show you were the owner prior to the violation.

Acceptable documentation may include:

Insurance information in your name showing the policy started on the sale date and prior to the violation

Proof of lien dated prior to violation/incident

Canceled check for payment posted to sellers account prior to the violation/incident

I sold a car before my violation why is the new owner being asked for a purchaser’s statement?

Within 5 days of the qualifying incident the violator may inform Driver and Vehicle Services in writing of any vehicles that were recently transferred. Additional documentation may be required to establish the date of sale.

I bought a car and was pulled over for displaying impounded plates. The owner never told me about the Plate Impound and I was allowed to buy new plates for the vehicle, why was I not informed of the Plate Impound at the time of transfer?

It is the seller’s responsibility to disclose information regarding the vehicle to you at the time of sale. The information necessary to enter an impound order onto the state system may not always be available immediately after the incident. If you transfer a vehicle at a deputy registrar office during this interim period that office may not have information that the vehicle is subject to plate impound. Always make sure you know the reason a vehicle is being sold without plates.

Administrative Reviews:

I received a notice of plate impoundment for my vehicle but, I was not driving the vehicle, what can I do?

If you were not the driver and were not a passenger in the vehicle at the time of the incident, you may apply for administrative review. If you are an owner, co-owner or lessee of a vehicle and the driver an administrative review will result in a review of the paperwork to assure it qualifies for plate impoundment, and most often does not result in the return of license plates.

DVS may only rescind the plate impound order if:

- The driver was valid at the time of the incident and the owner (co-owner, lessee) was not present in the vehicle or;

- The vehicle was reported to the police as stolen/ misused (**Must have Police Report indicating the vehicle was reported stolen**)

These are the only two conditions where **DVS** is allowed to rescind the Plate Impound Order.

If neither of the above situations is applicable, a **Judicial review** may be filed in the county in which the violation occurred. Judicial reviews must be filed within 60 days of the qualifying incident and require a fee paid to the courts. If administrative or judicial review results in rescindment of the plate impound order, you will be allowed to apply for new plates at no fee.

The plate impound order was sustained, how can I get plates now?

If an administrative review sustains the impound order “Special Registration” plates must be displayed for continued use of the vehicle. The cost of the plates is \$50 plus filing and registration fees. These plates must be displayed for at least one-year from the date of the qualifying incident if the vehicle is being used on roads and highways.

If the violator participates in the Ignition Interlock Device Program (IIDP) regular plates may be reinstated and displayed before the end of the impound period.

I loaned my car to a friend, but didn’t know the driver wasn’t valid, why are my plates impounded?

Any person operating or being in control of a vehicle must have **VALID** driving privileges (**LIMITED, CONAX, ID ONLY & RECORD ONLY** may be considered **VALID** with additional paperwork). **DVS** may only rescind the Plate Impoundment in this situation if you provide a police report showing the vehicle reported **stolen or misused** prior to the violation. Matters involving a “Breach of Trust” may be taken up with law enforcement or at Judicial Review.

I loaned my car to a friend, and the driver wasn’t drinking, why are my plates impounded?

Pursuant to M.S. 169A.60 if the driver’s status is “Canceled Inimical to Public Safety” (**CANC-IPS**) for repeated drug or alcohol violations, the vehicle is subject to plate impoundment. (In this case the driver does not have to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol to qualify for plate impoundment.) With the Driver License number you may check the status of a driver 24/7 by calling 651-284-2000 or online.

I never received the impound notice?

The impound notice is delivered by Law Enforcement at the time of the qualifying incident, alternatively Law Enforcement may elect mail the notice to the owner’s/violator’s last known address. A mailing of this type meets the statute’s (MS 169A.60) requirement of notification; No additional notification is required. (*pre-MNLARS a **2P** suspense/deficiency on vehicle record, an asterisk after the plate number in the 2P string indicates this was the vehicle driven in the qualifying incident*)

DVS may also send notification if a driving record indicates a qualifying incident but no corresponding notice from Law Enforcement is found

I loaned my car to a friend, but I never received the impound notice?

The impound notice is produced at the time of the qualifying incident and includes a “vehicle” copy to remain in the vehicle, alternatively law enforcement may elect to mail the notice to the last known address of the vehicle owner and/or violator, this meets the statute’s (MS 169A.60) requirement of notification.

Reinstatements:

I am participating in the Ignition Interlock program do I still need Special Registration Plates?

The plate impound statute MS 169A.60 was amended effective July 1, 2021

When a person is enrolled in ignition interlock device program and has an NCL status of VALID standard plates may be reinstated on all of the affected vehicles.

This includes the vehicle used in the incident and any affected vehicles the violator owns co-owns or leases.

When impounded the plates still need to be removed from all vehicles and new plates purchased.

- If the violator did not already purchase WX plates the early reinstatement fee is \$100 then they can proceed to purchase any plate type.
- If the violator has already purchased WX plates they have already paid \$50 and the early reinstatement fee is \$50, then they can proceed to purchase any plate type.

When the violator is reinstated and enrolled in the ignition interlock device program they will be restricted to only operating vehicles that are equipped with ignition interlock but any other vehicles affected are allowed to pay the early reinstatement fee and display standard plates. The device does not need to be installed in all vehicles.

*Most people will likely have to buy a set of WX plates for the vehicle on which the device will be installed so that a friend or family member may drive the vehicle to the installer. After installation provided all other requirements are met the violator should be Valid within 2 business days and then eligible to pay the early reinstatement fees and buy standard plates for all affected vehicles.

I am participating in the Ignition Interlock program but I don't have vehicle registered in my name, I will be using a friend or family member's vehicle; Do I need Special Registration plates?

As of July 1, 2021: If the violator participates in the Ignition Interlock Device Program (IIDP) regular plates may be displayed before the end of the impound period.

I am purchasing WX plates but the record does not show an Impound order?

Any vehicle owner may purchase and display Special Registration plates if they wish; an Impound order does not have to be on record. A person may choose to display the plates voluntarily or there may be an unexpected delay in processing the order. If someone purchases WX plates and later finds out they don't need them they may qualify for a full or pro-rated refund.

My DUI was rescinded in court when can I get regular plates?

If the qualifying incident is “**rescinded**” or “**dismissed with prejudice**” you may apply for new standard or special plates you may have been originally displaying (ie collector, personalized, critical habitat, etc). If the charges are rescinded and you opt for a special plate that you did not previously have fees will be due. You must bring the paperwork from the court that indicates the qualifying incident (Driving after CANC-IPS, DUI) was **dismissed with prejudice or rescinded**. Pleading to a lesser charge or obtaining a stay of adjudication does not qualify by itself. In these cases, the order from the court must specifically address and rescind the plate impoundment order (example: *The plate impound order of MM/DD/YYYY is hereby rescinded as a result of this plea to a lesser charge*)

***COURT ORDERED IMPOUNDS**

Who qualifies for Court Ordered Plate Impoundment?

The courts may impose a Court Ordered Plate Impoundment pursuant to M.S. 168.041.

Most often for driving after cancellation, suspension, or revocation and for driving without insurance.

The license plates of my vehicle have been impounded by court order; I am selling the vehicle. What do I need to do?

Vehicles subject to Court Ordered impound may not be sold without the permission of the court or until the person named in the order is valid. Permission from the named court is required for a transfer to proceed.

The license plates of my vehicle have been impounded by court order; may I have plates to use the vehicle?

Vehicles subject to Court Ordered impound may display “Special Registration” plates, but only with permission from the court. The cost is \$25.00 plus any registration fees due and the state/deputy-filing fee. The order from the court must grant the vehicle owner permission to obtain this type of special registration plates.

I have “Special Registration” (WX-WZ) plates due to a court ordered impound and my license is now valid, when may I get regular plates?

Vehicles subject to Court Ordered impound may purchase regular plates when permission is granted by the court (must have documentation) or the person named in the court order is valid. There is no reinstatement fee due for a court ordered plate impoundment, however replacement plates must be purchased and registration tax may be due.