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Personalized License Plate Guidelines and Restrictions

Guidelines for Creating a Personalized Message

1. Use any combination of letters, numbers and the special characters dash, space and ampersand.
2. The number of characters allowed on a license plate varies depending on the plate design. Including the International Symbol of Access reduces the number of characters you can display on your plate.
3. To create a space between characters, leave the applicable box empty.
4. Some plates, such as military and university plates, display a logo. The logo position is stationary and cannot be moved.
5. Personalized character combinations for license plates registered to a vehicle must be unique. Therefore, your choice may be in use already. Simply enter another combination and try again.

Policy

Personalized license plates are issued pursuant to Va. Code § [46.2-726](#), which provides that "the Commissioner may, in his discretion, reserve license plates with certain registration numbers or letters or combinations thereof for issuance to persons requesting license plates so numbered and lettered."

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will deny applications for personalized license plates in accordance with the Personalized License Plate Issuance Guidelines set forth below. DMV will cancel and recall any personalized license plates which were issued and subsequently discovered to be in violation of the Guidelines.

In addition, Va. Code § [46.2-725](#) prohibits DMV from issuing personalized plates to any vehicle owner or co-owner who is registered pursuant to the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry Act if the requested plate combination can be read, interpreted, or understood to be a reference to children.

Guidelines for Issuing a Personalized License Plate

DMV will not approve an application for a personalized license plate if the requested plate contains any combination of characters that in any way carries a connotation which may reasonably be seen by a person viewing the license plate as:

- Profane, obscene, or vulgar in nature;
- Sexually explicit or graphic;
- Excretory-related;
- Used to describe intimate body parts or genitals;
- Used to reference or describe violence;
- Used to describe illegal activities or illegal substances;

Recall of License Plates

DMV reserves the right to recall and cancel any personalized license plate that was issued if the agency subsequently determines or discovers that the personalized license plate was not in compliance with these guidelines when issued or if, due to changing language usage, the personalized license plate has become non-compliant with these guidelines.

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