

<b>Motor Vehicle Procedure Manual</b>
<b>Registration</b>
Creation of A New Specialty License Plate

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**Legal Authority**

[Section 320.08053](#), Florida Statutes, provide the requirements for an organization to request the creation of a new specialty license plate.

[Section 320.08056](#), Florida Statutes, provides the responsibilities of this department in developing and issuing specialty license plates when legislation authorizes a new specialty license plate. This includes discontinuing issuance, requests for redesign, inventory levels, transferring to another vehicle and design requirements.

[Section 320.08058](#), Florida Statutes, lists a number of specialty license plates.

[Section 320.08062](#), Florida Statutes, Audits and Attestations required, annual use fees of specialty license plates.

## Description and Use

This procedure provides information and instructions to assist employees of The Tax Collector, License Plate Agent, and The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV) in providing requirements for Creation of a New Specialty License Plate.

## Legislative Process

- A. The organization must seek a Representative or Senator to sponsor the bill to create their specialty license plate.
- B. Only when the specialty license plate bill has passed and signed into law by the Governor can the organization start the pre-sale process. Once this occurs, the pre-sale process will begin on the effective date established by the bill.
- C. The proposed legislation will include the following general information:
  1. The amount of the annual use fee pursuant to section [320.08056\(4\)](#), Florida Statutes.
  2. How the funds are to be expended pursuant to section [320.08058](#), Florida Statutes.
  3. The basic design specifications of the license plate, the verbiage at the bottom of the license plate, and the details for the license plate to be personalized.

## Pre-Sale Vouchers

- A. On the effective date of the bill relating to the specialty license plate, the organization will start the pre-sale process.
- B. Starting on the effective date of the bill relating to the specialty license plate, the organization has 24 months to sell 3,000 vouchers and 4,000 vouchers for out-of-state colleges or universities before the license plate will be manufactured.
- C. If, at the end of the 24-month presale period, 3,000 vouchers or 4,000 vouchers for out-of-state colleges or universities have not been sold, the specialty plate is deauthorized and FLHSMV shall discontinue development of the plate and discontinue issuance of the presale vouchers.

## De-Authorization and Discontinuation of a Specialty License Plate

- A. Once the voucher requirements are met and the specialty license plate is available at the tax collector offices and license plate for sale, the organization must maintain a specific number of valid registrations. FLHSMV shall de-authorize and discontinue the issuance of the specialty license plate if the number of valid specialty license plates falls below 3,000 valid registrations or 4,000 valid registrations for out-of-state colleges or universities for at least 12 consecutive months. A warning

letter shall be mailed to the sponsoring organization of each plate whose total number of valid specialty plate registrations is below 3,000 or 4,000. After the initial letter is sent, emails are sent monthly to the organization with the current number of valid registrations. This requirement does not apply to collegiate license plates.

B. Upon de-authorization of the license plate, a purchaser of the license plate voucher may use the annual use fee collected as a credit towards any other specialty license plate or apply for a refund on form [HSMV 83363](#), Application for License Plate/Decal Refund.

### **Specialty License Plate Design, Development, Manufacture and Distribution:**

- A. The following provides general information concerning the design, development, manufacture, and distribution of a specialty license plate:
1. The Division of Motorist Services (division) is responsible for coordinating the design and development of the specialty license plate.
  2. The organization must submit the proposed art design to the division, in a medium prescribed by FLHSMV, as soon as practical, but no later than 60 days after the act approving the specialty license plate becomes a law.
  3. The specialty license plate must have the design required by the enacting statute for that plate. Additionally, the design and colors must be approved by the division.
  4. The organization that requested the specialty license plate may not request a redesign of the specialty plate unless the inventory has been depleted, or the organization agrees to purchase the remaining inventory of the specialty license plates from FLHSMV at cost.

### **Audits and Attestations**

For specific information, instructions, and forms, refer to Procedure [RS-39](#), Annual Audit or Report of Specialty License Plate and Voluntary Contribution Annual Use Fees.

### **Revision(s) to Procedure**

5/23/2022 Updated procedure to the new format, links reviewed.

07/31/15 Updated Section I and Section III with updated statute numbers.

02/14/14: Procedure updated with current process to create a specialty license plate. Deleted reference to Chapter 45, Section 2008-176 Laws of Florida, added [Section 320.08056\(9\)](#), Florida Statutes; [Section 320.08058](#), Florida Statutes; [Section 320.08062](#), Florida Statutes; and Section [320.08056\(8\)\(a\)](#), Florida Statutes. Added information about the beginning of pre-sale process and manufacturing.

## **EXHIBIT A**

### **BASIC SPECIFICATIONS FOR SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES**

The following basic specifications would apply to specialty license plates based on whether a center design or left side design graphic is used.

#### **GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS:**

1. The size of the license plate must be 12 inches by 6 inches.
2. A four-color process is used to create the design; cyan, magenta, yellow, and black. This does not include the roll coat color for the alphanumeric.
3. The license plate characters will be roll coated in basic black, blue, green, red, or white ink. The contrast between the background colors for the license plate and the license plate number must be sufficient for law enforcement officers to clearly read the license plate characters during day and nighttime hours.
4. The word "FLORIDA" must be printed at the top of the license plate. Florida must be visible and of appropriate size for law enforcement to view. A specialty license plate may bear a department approved graphic.
5. All colors must be specified on the color printouts submitted with the requirements.

#### **CENTER DESIGN:**

1. The center graphic must be no larger than 2 1/2 inches wide by 3 inches high.
2. The license plate number must have three characters to the left and three to the right of the centered graphic design. The license plate number is limited to six (6) digits of alpha and numeric characters.

#### **LEFT SIDE DESIGN:**

1. The graphic must be on the left side of the license plate and be no larger than 3 1/2 inches wide and 3 inches high.
2. The license plate number is limited to five (5) digits of alpha and numeric characters that will be printed to the right of the left side graphic.

## EXHIBIT B

**(These instructions are directly from 3M; they are not to be altered in any way.)**

3M Traffic Safety and Security Division

### **SSRG LICENSE PLATE DESIGN GUIDE**

Version 7.14.16

The following is a guide designed to provide 3M license plate customers with information relating to graphic license plate artwork, design, and production.

#### **PRINTING CAPABILITIES**

To better understand the design process, the license plate printing process will be explained.

##### **Medium**

All 3M license plates are printed on reflective sheeting. The sheeting is not as dimensionally stable as paper and therefore stretching may occur.

##### **Inks**

The inks used for license plate printing are manufactured by 3M and are designed to be UV fade resistant. These inks are transparent in order to meet reflectivity standards. Please use PANTONE® numbers to specify color. Metallic and fluorescent PANTONE® inks (numbers 801-877) are not available for license plate printing.

#### **SSRG Printing Process**

- SSRG uses CMYK 4-Color Process printing (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black inks).
- PANTONE colors can be submitted for reference but will be converted to CMYK. Not all PANTONE colors can be matched using Process Color printing but will be printed using the 4-color equivalent. Metallics and fluorescent colors cannot be reproduced using CMYK printing.
- Tick marks will be placed in the four corners of the plate design. When applied to the license plate blank, only a small portion of the tick mark will show in each corner of the plate. These are required for two things:
  1. Trimming and slitting
  2. Registration in the blanking process.
- Graphics cannot “bleed” off the edge of the license plate. SSRG requires a 1/4” white or clear border around the entire design. All graphics must fit within these dimensions: 5.5” x 11.5” high (license plate blanks approximately 6” x 12”).

#### **DESIGN**

Keep the following parameters in mind before starting any license plate design.

## **Size**

Designs for use in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, should fit in a 11.5 x 5.5-inch rectangle. The resulting 1/4 margin is needed to ensure acceptable finished license plates, given the requirements of the sheeting and the production process. Bolt holes are .3125 inches in diameter, and each are spaced (to bolt hole center) +/- 3.5 inches horizontal and +/- 2.375 inches vertical from the center of the plate. Please check with your state motor vehicle agency for specific plate geometry and design requirements (i.e., size and location of the alpha-numeric, sticker pockets, etc.).

## **Graphic Placement and Legibility**

Avoid heavy coverage of ink in the alpha-numeric areas. Heavy coverage in these areas reduces legibility for law enforcement. Design elements (text and logos) dark in color should be spaced at least 1/4 of an inch away from the alpha numeric.

## **Color**

Unless special permission is obtained, only four spot colors may be used in any design including black. This does not include the roll coat color for the alpha numeric. For example, a design could be comprised of three PANTONE® colors in addition to black. While halftones and graduated tones can be used, a shift in these tones may result due to the unique properties of the reflective materials and printing processes.

## **Line Art**

Avoid thin lines under 0.008 of an inch in width. Intricate solid shapes are acceptable. However, a small loss of detail may occur. Design elements (shapes), smaller than .008 x .008 inches and/or .008 inches in any dimension, will fail to print.

## **Alphanumeric Plate Message Color**

3M suggests using a black roll coat ink for the plate message. This provides the highest visibility for law enforcement during day and nighttime viewing. It is also optimal for toll/ALRP camera readability.

## **DESIGN SUBMISSIONS**

3M TSSD uses Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop.

### **Preferable File Formats:**

- We prefer vector-based artwork (Adobe Illustrator).
- If a layout is designed in Photoshop, please provide layered Photoshop document (.psd).
- Preferred file format in order of preference: eps, ai, pdf, & psd.
- All digital images (photos, scans, etc) must be at least 300 DPI at actual size.
- Outline all fonts or include them with artwork.
- A license plate template (Adobe Illustrator file) is available upon request.

## **Compatibility**

3M TSSD accepts all Adobe Illustrator files. All placed or parsed bitmap files must be included separately or embedded in the AI file.

3M TSSD accepts all Adobe Photoshop files, as well.

Corel Draw users: Save files in the Illustrator format. Include all placed or embedded bitmaps as separate files.

3M TSSD cannot work directly with .cdr files.

Corel Paint users: Save files in the tiff format, uncompressed.

Freehand and other vector art program users: Due to problems in the past with converting these files, check with 3M TSSD before sending.

If you believe there may be a compatibility issue between your system and 3M TSSD's, send black and white color separation printouts on paper or film at 100%. 3M TSSD will scan and recreate artwork to match the original design. Before making printouts, fill all halftones 100% so that its shape can be clearly delineated. Include a composite print of the design at 100%. Specify all fonts used, color call outs, and halftone tint values if halftones are used. If photographs are incorporated into the design, please submit. 3M TSSD will scan them for placement into the design.

Do not use compression software of any kind for vector files.

3M TSSD does not use 3D or CAD software.

## **ELECTRONIC DESIGN**

The following guidelines are for customers sending electronic files.

All license plate designs are completed in vector form (Adobe Illustrator) with placed photographs, if any. 3M TSSD prefers that customers send original photographs and/or traditional illustrations for scanning and converting to spot color. 3M TSSD will accept Adobe Photoshop files (eps, jpg, or tif, 300 DPI) of scanned or created material. However, the resolution cannot be increased. Photographs and illustrations will be converted to spot colors. The finished result will be a compilation of monochromatic (single spot color) areas. CMYK or Process color printing is not utilized for conventional printing of license plates.

### **Vector Artwork**

Fonts, logos, halftone areas, gradient fill areas, and line art, should be constructed in a vector drawing program such as Adobe Illustrator. This makes file sizes smaller and editing, trapping, and color separation easier.

Fill and/or stroke vector paths, using the PANTONE® colors. If using Adobe Illustrator, use default black instead of C:0%, M:0%, Y:0%, and K:100%. Use default white instead of C:0%, M:0%, Y:0%, and K:0%.

Convert all fonts to vector form by using Create Outlines in Adobe Illustrator or convert text to paths according to the vector program that is being used.

### **Bitmapped Artwork**

Bitmapped artwork is any image, such as a scanned photograph or traditional illustration that is in pixel form. This artwork is commonly used or created in a paint program such as Adobe Photoshop or Corel Paint. Bitmapped artwork can be successfully incorporated into a license plate design using a variety of methods. Again, 3M TSSD prefers that the customer send continuous tone photographs and/or traditional illustrations for scanning, clipping path creation, spot color conversion, placing, and color separating. 3M TSSD can accept scanned or created images from the customer, at a resolution of 300dpi, at 100% size. Line art should be scanned at 1200dpi, at 100%.

3M TSSD will scan and convert any line art on paper or film.

Customers sending in pictures for scanning should keep in mind that photographs and/or illustrations from previously printed materials such as books, magazines, and brochures will not scan well due to halftone dot patterns. Scanning such material may constitute a copyright violation, for which the customer, not 3M TSSD will be held liable. Do not send website images or printouts thereof. Website images use the lowest possible image quality (8-bit color at 72dpi). These images are not usable.

Save bitmapped artwork in the tiff file format. 3M TSSD does not recommend image compression. If image must be compressed, use LZW compression only.

Please include a hardcopy or detailed layout for each design. This can be color, black and white laser prints, or drawn layouts. Include color call outs, identify the fonts used, and specify halftone values. This avoids any confusion concerning the design and its elements.



## SUBMITTING ARTWORK

If the files exceed 5 MB, we can arrange for a web drop box for the art to be uploaded. Physical artwork can also be submitted for scanning or copied onto a CD.

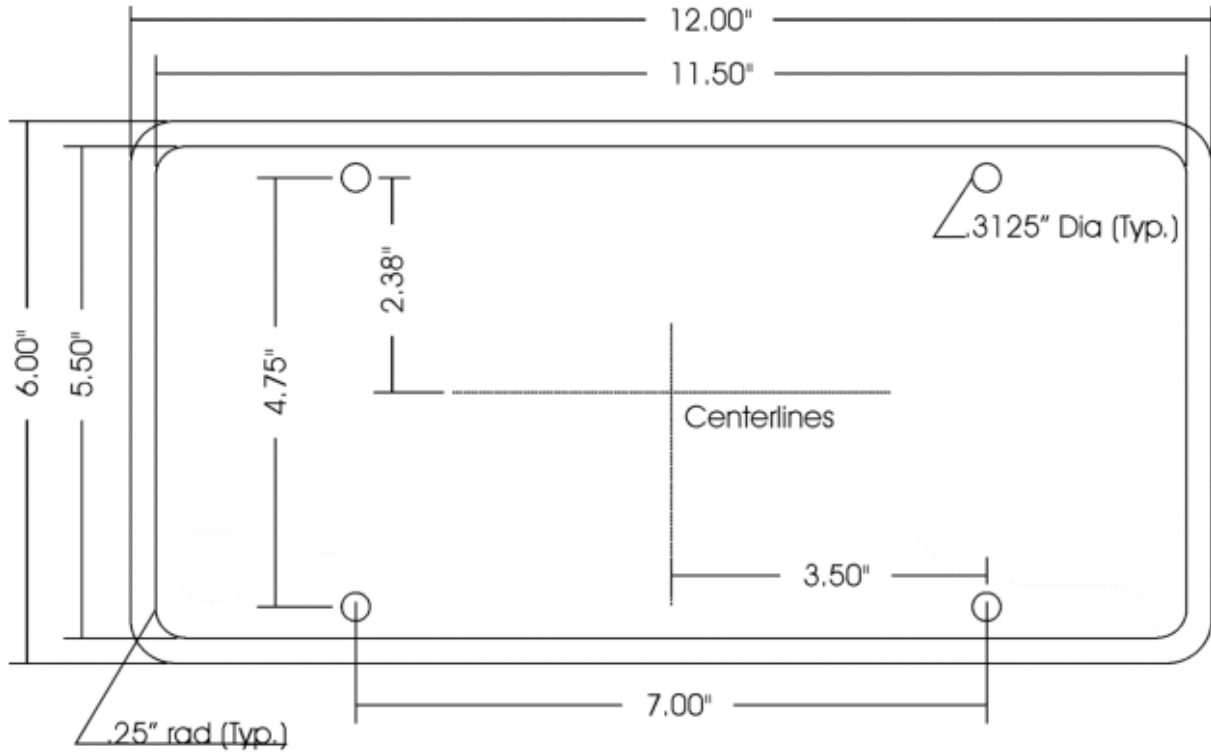


Figure 1 – Digital License Plate layout