



For Immediate Release

Aug. 9, 2012

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New identification rules for vehicle titling, registration paves way for future automation, enhances public safety

Texans titling a vehicle in the state and first-time registrants will soon have to show identification, enhancing public safety and paving the way for more customer-friendly automation.

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) Board passed new identification rules at its Thursday meeting. The rules were required as part of two new state laws (HB 2017 and HB 2357) that mandate identification for titling a vehicle and first-time registrants. This change does not apply to registration renewals.

The identification requirements are a two-phase process designed to give Texans, tax assessor-collectors and businesses an opportunity to become educated on the new procedure. Through Aug. 31, 2013, an acceptable form of ID is a government-issued ID with a photo, a unique identification number, a birth date, an expiration date and must be acceptable to the county Tax Assessor-Collector.

On Sept. 1, 2013 and thereafter, the only acceptable government photo identification will be a:

- Driver license or state identification certification issued by a state or territory of the U.S.
- U. S. or foreign passport
- U. S. military identification
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) identification or identification issued under a U.S. Status of Forces Agreement
- U. S. Department of Homeland Security identification
- U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services documentation
- U.S. Department of State ID

The new identification requirements are another step towards creating more electronic services for customers, and ensuring the integrity of the motor vehicle database.

Next year Texans can expect to see the replacement of paper titles with electronic ones or “eTitles,” that will take the burden off vehicle owners to keep track of their title and help to reduce title fraud. The eTitle system is expected to launch in fall 2013.

The TxDMV plans to further automate the motor vehicle database so vehicle owners can be found by name. Currently the system can only find an owner in the database by the vehicle identification or license plate number.

“As we build out our new automation system, we will be able to use your Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) driver’s license number as the unique identifier to make sure we find all the vehicles in the TxDMV motor vehicle database that are under your name,” said Randy Elliston, TxDMV Vehicle Titles and Registration Division director. “For instance, you can imagine how many John Smiths we might have recorded among the millions of title records, but by tying John Smith’s name to his driver’s license number we can find the right one.”

Eventually this will allow vehicle owners to access their own information in the motor vehicle database. “We want to deliver to Texans a customer-centric system that is both useful and secure,” said TxDMV Executive Director Whitney Brewster.

The agency is in the process of securing a vendor to retool its Registration and Titling System so it can support additional online services for customers and streamline business processes.

The TxDMV continues to offer registration renewal, email registration renewal reminders, specialty plate ordering, customer address changes, vehicle transfer notifications and vehicle transfer permits online. Consumers can also check whether a moving company is licensed and any complaints filed with the TxDMV against moving, bus or truck companies on the TxDMV website, www.TxDMV.gov.

“The TxDMV is dedicated to improving customer service and convenience for citizens,” said TxDMV Board Chairman Victor Vandergriff. “Our employees and board members are focused on our mission to promote and protect the interests of the motoring public and citizens in the state of Texas.”

For more information on the new identification rules go to www.TxDMV.gov.

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) is charged with overseeing the state’s motor vehicle services that provide consumer protection, assist motor vehicle-related businesses and raise revenue for the state. For every \$1 it spends, the TxDMV returns \$10 to build and maintain highways, roads and bridges and provide needed services to Texans. Each year the agency registers almost 22 million vehicles; regulates vehicle dealers; credentials buses and big trucks for intrastate and interstate commerce; issues oversize and overweight permits; and awards grants to law enforcement agencies to reduce vehicle burglaries and thefts. Learn more at www.TxDMV.gov.