

# **Reference Guide for U.S. Government License Plates**

## **Guiding Documents**

1. The statutory requirements for government vehicle identification are contained in 40 U.S.C. 609, Identification of vehicles.
2. The Federal Management Regulation for vehicle identification, license plates, and exemptions can be found at FMR 102-34.85 through FMR 102-34.195
3. A list of assigned agency license plate prefixes is found in Appendix A of this Reference Guide.
4. The General Services Administration (GSA) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UNICOR for the license plate program. Requests for copies of the MOU can be sent to [vehicle.policy@gsa.gov](mailto:vehicle.policy@gsa.gov).

## **License Plate Design**

By statute, Federal vehicles are required to be conspicuously identified by displaying "For Official Use Only," "U.S. Government," and the agency owning the vehicle. The U.S. Government license plate is designed to comply with this requirement and is the preferable way to identify and display the required information on the vehicle.

U.S. Government license plates are issued in 2 sizes:

1. Regular sized plate for sedans, trucks, and most trailers
2. Smaller motorcycle sized plate for motorcycles, small trailers

U.S. Government License Plates are issued as:

1. 2-plate pair (an A plate and a B plate) for sedans and trucks  
Single plate for trailers and motorcycles (the A-plate only).

Regular Style License Plates:

All plates have an expiration date and expire in 8 Years 6 months.



**Current A and B plate license plate design (Oct 2014)**

U.S. Government license plates for agency-owned vehicles begin with the agency prefix (see Appendix A) and contain an agency name or logo in the lower left corner.

License plates not conforming with this design are obsolete and should be replaced and sent to UNICOR for destruction as soon as possible.

All license plate designs must be approved by the GSA, Office of Government-Wide Policy, and the agency fleet manager before UNICOR adds them to the license plate store.

The license plate design approving official (GSA, Office of Government-Wide Policy) shall ensure license plate font size is large enough to be reasonably legible given the space available on the plate.

Trailer License Plates:

Trailer license plates end with the letter “T”



**Typical Trailer plate design ending in “T”**

Motorcycle-size License Plates:

Motorcycle plates end with the letter “M”



**Motorcycle plate design ending in “M”**

Motorcycle-size plates can be used on any small vehicle or trailer operated on public roads where a license plate is required, and a full-sized plate would be too large. (For example, small ATV, snowmobile, or boat trailers). Where a license plate is not required, use “Off Road Identification Plates.”

Off Road and Equipment License Plates:

These plates can be issued and used for off-road vehicles (such as ATVs), construction, agricultural, and material handling equipment.

Note: Off Road plates and Equipment Identification plates are NOT registered in the Federal Government Motor Vehicle Registration System. The agency is responsible for keeping track of the plate assignment independently.



### License Plate Display

License plates are displayed in accordance with FMR 102-34.100 and FMR 102-34.110 through 150. **Federal sedans and trucks must display 2 U.S. Government license plates even if the State in which the vehicle is operating only requires one plate.** Note that trailers and motorcycles are only required to display one license plate on the rear of the vehicle.

## Purchasing License Plates

License Plates are purchased from UNICOR through an online store using an account set up by your agency.

Each agency must enter into a MOU with UNICOR designating who can purchase plates, how they will be paid, how they will be shipped, and who (the agency or UNICOR) will number the plates. When an agency numbers their own plates, they are responsible in case a plate is ordered that duplicates an existing number. For that reason, most agencies agree to have UNICOR enumeration.

To set up an account and gain access to the online license plate store, please contact Jim Gill of UNICOR at [CUSGDLP@usdog.gov](mailto:CUSGDLP@usdog.gov).

## Registration of License Plates

U.S. Government license plates must be registered in the Federal Government Motor Vehicle Registration System (this is now accessed through GSAFleet.gov) per FMR 102-34.120. Agencies are responsible for the accuracy of the vehicle and license plate data in GSAFleet.gov for the lifecycle of the vehicle and license plates. At a minimum, please keep up to date with the status of each plate and the current point of contact.

**MANAGE MY FLEET**

**Vehicle Inventory**  
View and update vehicle specifications and download up-to-date registration cards for each vehicle. Add new vehicle assets to the inventory and update existing ones with points of contact and new license plates.

**License Plate Orders**  
Retrieve the status of all incoming license plate orders. See all license plates on an order, mark license plates as received, and begin using them on vehicles, motorcycles, and trailers.




**Vehicle Registration**  
Register federally owned and operated vehicles with GSA Fleet. Step through a simple process to attach license plates and points of contact to a vehicle. Retrieve up-to-date registration cards for each vehicle.

**License Plates**  
Track and manage the details and history of each license plate. Manage license plates that need to be reconciled, reported damaged, have gone missing, or need to be returned for destruction.

Remember, once plates are shipped, the receipt of license plate shipments must be acknowledged by the agency to demonstrate that the shipment arrived and is complete. Acknowledgement is accomplished by updating the status of license plates to “RC” - “Received by Agency” as soon as possible after receipt. If the status is not changed to “RC” within 30 days of the shipment date, the status automatically changes to “MS - Missing” status.

When a plate is physically attached to a vehicle, the GSAFleet.gov license plate record and the vehicle record must be combined to create a complete registration record. The GSAFleet.gov license plate status will then show that the plate(s) has been “AT - Attached to Vehicle.” GSAFleet.gov records are never deleted. Instead, ensure that the correct status is used for excess plate records (such as PD - “Pending Destruction” or RT - “Returned to UNICOR”).

## License Plate Order Statuses

|              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Order status | ● Shipped            |
| Updated by   | System               |
| Date updated | —                    |
|              |                      |
| Order status | ● Received           |
| Updated by   | System               |
| Date updated | 4/3/2022 · 04:52 AM  |
|              |                      |
| Order status | ● Missing            |
| Updated by   | System               |
| Date updated | 2/16/2022 · 10:02 AM |

Note: Updating the status of GSAFleet.gov records are an agency responsibility. GSA will only update records for extraordinary situations. If you believe you have an extraordinary situation, your request for assistance must come from your Agency/Bureau Fleet Manager. The Agency Fleet Manager is required to validate the request prior to sending the request to GSA.

### Vehicle Identification Card

The U.S. Government Vehicle Identification card is NOT an actual registration card. It is an identification card that states that the Federal license plates and Motor Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) are registered in GSAFleet.gov, and provides vehicle, license plate, and insurance information that may be useful if stopped by law enforcement.

The U.S. Government Vehicle Identification card may be downloaded from GSAFleet.gov. To download the Vehicle Identification Card, a new style license plate with a valid expiration date must be properly assigned to a vehicle and registered in GSAFleet.gov.

Printing an Identification card is not mandatory. Your agency may print and use motor vehicle identification cards as needed.

## Returning License Plates

U.S. Government License plates (all types and sizes) - once “attached” to a vehicle - cannot be reused and must be returned to UNICOR for destruction when the vehicle is disposed of.

U.S. Government license plates that are expired, removed, replaced, damaged or unneeded must be returned to UNICOR for destruction. There is no charge for the return shipment of excess license plates. You may also request a copy of the license plate return SOP at [vehicle.policy@gsa.gov](mailto:vehicle.policy@gsa.gov). We do not send forms automatically. The form is provided upon request. UNICOR will provide a certificate of destruction for returned plates.

**Local destruction of U.S. Government license plates is not permitted.** All excess plates must be returned to UNICOR per SOP instructions found on the main menu of [GSAFleet.gov](http://GSAFleet.gov).

U.S. Government license plates that are locally destroyed will be listed as “missing” in [GSAFleet.gov](http://GSAFleet.gov) permanently. Since the actual disposition of the plate cannot be verified and the plate may be potentially used for nefarious reasons.

**Note:** Only return **U.S. Government license plates** and SOP inventory sheets to UNICOR. Plates must be in PD status in [GSAFleet.gov](http://GSAFleet.gov) before they are returned.

DO NOT include fleet cards or fuel cards with the shipment.

DO NOT send State issued license plates to UNICOR for destruction.

## Lost or Stolen License Plates

FMR 102.34-135 contains a list of actions that must be taken when a license plate is lost or stolen. For *U.S. Government license plates*, agencies should:

- Report to your local security office (or equivalent).
- Report to your local police department.
- Report to GSA Fleet when a GSA Fleet leased motor vehicle is involved; and
- Update the status of the license plates in the Federal Government Motor Vehicle Registration System.

For *District of Columbia or State license plates*, agencies should:

- Report to your local security office (or equivalent); and
- Report to either the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, or the State Department of Motor Vehicles, as appropriate.

We also recommend that agencies report lost or stolen plates to the Federal Protective Service via the Service's National Toll-Free Number at 1-877-437-7411.

**Note: Missing U.S. Government license plates pose a very serious security concern.** It is important that a missing license plate has its GSAFleet.gov status changed to "missing" as soon as it was noticed. Do not wait until after a search is made to locate the missing plate. Change the status immediately. If the plate is used by unauthorized persons and spotted by law enforcement, agents will receive a message through the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) that the plate is missing and to approach with caution.

Your quick action to change the missing plate's status to "missing" in GSAFleet.gov is critically important. If the license plate is later found and reattached to the vehicle, the status can be changed back to "attached." There is no penalty for listing a plate as missing.

**Note:** *Lost or Missing License Plates cannot be re-ordered.*



## Shared with NLETS

|   |  |                        |           |                        |           |                 |         |              |                          |              |                      |
|---|--|------------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|-----------------|---------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| <p>License plate A status <span style="float: right;">● Received</span></p> <p>License plate B status <span style="float: right;">● Received</span></p> <p>Expiration Date <span style="float: right;">07/2030</span></p> <p>UNICOR order <span style="float: right;"><a href="#">45201068</a></span></p> <p>Last Updated <span style="float: right;">03/29/2022 - 4:58 pm</span></p>   | <p>License plate A status <span style="float: right;">● Attached</span></p> <p>License plate B status <span style="float: right;">● Attached</span></p> <p>Expiration Date <span style="float: right;">06/2030</span></p> <p>UNICOR order <span style="float: right;"><a href="#">45200552</a></span></p> <p>Last Updated <span style="float: right;">01/27/2022 - 11:51 pm</span></p>   |                        |           |                        |           |                 |         |              |                          |              |                      |
| <p>License plate A status <span style="float: right;">● Pending destruction</span></p> <p>License plate B status <span style="float: right;">● Pending destruction</span></p> <p>Expiration Date <span style="float: right;">12/2029</span></p> <p>UNICOR order <span style="float: right;"><a href="#">10692418</a></span></p> <p>Last Updated <span style="float: right;">01/27/2022 - 11:51 pm</span></p>  | <p>License plate A status <span style="float: right;">● Destroyed</span></p> <p>License plate B status <span style="float: right;">● Destroyed</span></p> <p>Expiration Date <span style="float: right;">01/2028</span></p> <p>UNICOR order <span style="float: right;"><a href="#">45159841</a></span></p> <p>Last Updated <span style="float: right;">01/27/2022 - 11:51 pm</span></p> |                        |           |                        |           |                 |         |              |                          |              |                      |
| <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">License plate A status</td> <td style="text-align: right;">● Missing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>License plate B status</td> <td style="text-align: right;">● Missing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expiration Date</td> <td style="text-align: right;">06/2030</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNICOR order</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><a href="#">45200552</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Last Updated</td> <td style="text-align: right;">02/18/2022 - 7:00 pm</td> </tr> </table> |  | License plate A status | ● Missing | License plate B status | ● Missing | Expiration Date | 06/2030 | UNICOR order | <a href="#">45200552</a> | Last Updated | 02/18/2022 - 7:00 pm |
| License plate A status  | ● Missing  |                        |           |                        |           |                 |         |              |                          |              |                      |
| License plate B status  | ● Missing  |                        |           |                        |           |                 |         |              |                          |              |                      |
| Expiration Date   | 06/2030  |                        |           |                        |           |                 |         |              |                          |              |                      |
| UNICOR order  | <a href="#">45200552</a>   |                        |           |                        |           |                 |         |              |                          |              |                      |
| Last Updated  | 02/18/2022 - 7:00 pm   |                        |           |                        |           |                 |         |              |                          |              |                      |

### Release of License Plate or Registration Information to Outside Sources

GSAFleet.gov Registration information is ONLY released through NLETS. Several precautions are built into GSA’s responses to NLETS inquiries designed to protect Federal law enforcement agents and their mission. These safeguards are lost if users provide GSAFleet.gov data outside of NLETS. Agencies and their authorized users have full access to their own data and may exam information as needed within the GSAFleet.gov system.

In addition, Federal license plate numbers are never verified as “in use” or even verified as a license plate not currently in use and photos of license plate designs are never provided to outside inquiries (for example: movie studios asking for “unused” numbers to place on license plate props). Knowing which numbers are “valid” could aid lawbreakers in their activities. Providing a license plate number or confirming a license plate number could shift liability to the Government in the event the plate is used in a crime.

## Vehicle Transfers

Normally, once “attached” to a vehicle, the license plate stays with that vehicle until the vehicle is disposed of by the owning agency. However, sometimes, agencies elect to transfer vehicles to new agencies or transfer vehicles between activities and/or locations within the same agency.

### Vehicle Transfers to a New Agency

The GSAFleet.gov Users Guide explains how to transfer a vehicle from one agency to a new agency within the GSAFleet.gov environment (Chapter 3.1.4, Transferring a Vehicle). The original license plates attached to the vehicle that is being transferred to a new agency must be disassociated from that vehicle within the GSAFleet.gov, have their status updated within the GSAFleet.gov as “Pending Destruction” (PD) or returned to UNICOR for destruction (RT).

The actual license plates should be removed from the vehicle and returned to UNICOR following the SOP (found on the GSAFleet.gov main menu page). The new agency will be responsible for purchasing license plates for the transferred vehicle and updating GSAFleet.gov to confirm the new agency, the new POC, and the new license plate number.

### Vehicle Transfers within the Same Agency

When a vehicle is transferred within the same agency (from one bureau to another, or from one location to another), internal agency policy should determine if the tags remain with the vehicle or should be replaced.

Some agencies use license plates with assigned number ranges or suffix letters to designate specific bureaus or locations. Thus, agency fleet managers within those agencies may require tag replacement to align the transferred vehicle to its new bureau or location.

## Off-Road Identification Plates

Off-road identification plates ARE NOT license plates. They are simply identification plates intended to number equipment. They are designed to be bright and obvious so they can never be confused with a U.S. Government license plate. Typical items that display off-road plates are forklifts, ATVs, construction equipment, and agricultural equipment.

Note: If the off-road equipment will occasionally be operated on a public road where a license plate is required, obtain U.S. Government license plates for the vehicle. Use “off-road identification plates” for identifying vehicles and equipment that is NEVER operated on a public road.

While all U.S. Government license plates MUST be registered within GSAFleet.gov, “**Off-road identification plates**” are not required to be registered in GSAFleet.gov.



### *Sample Off-Road plate designs*

Off-Road identification plate designs are approved by the GSA Office of Government-wide policy (vehicle.policy@gsa.gov) and manufactured by UNICOR. Off-Road identification plates should never begin with the agency prefix or any letter. The agency prefix should ideally identify the end (right side) of the plate number; however, this is not required.

## **State and Foreign Plates**

This document discusses U.S. Government license plates only. Off-road identification plates are only discussed to differentiate from actual U.S. Government license plates. State license plates, foreign country license plates and plates manufactured for use on vehicles outside the U.S. in accordance with foreign country agreements are not considered or discussed in detail in this document. State plates are registered by the respective issuing Department Motor Vehicle and must follow State procedures. Likewise, locally issued plates in use in foreign countries must follow in-country laws and regulations. Off-road identification plates, State license plates, and locally issued plates (non-U.S. Government plates) in foreign countries are not required to be registered in GSAFleet.gov. Use of State issued plates should be in accordance with FMR 102- 34.110.

## **Sample or Customized U.S. Government License Plates**

In this post-9/11 security environment in which we still operate, sample or custom U.S. Government license plates are no longer authorized and are no longer produced, even for Federal agencies and personnel. As the display of a federal license plate is one of the keys to gaining access to Federal facilities or conducting certain activities, even the remote possibility that a sample plate may be illegally used and mistaken for a valid plate is enough to no longer allow them. The goal of this policy is to maximize as much as we can the protection and safety of Federal personnel and the public.

## Appendix A

### Listing of U.S. Government License Plate Codes

| License Plate Prefix Code | Name of Federal Entity  |
|---------------------------|---|
| A                         | Department of Agriculture   |
| AF                        | Department of the Air Force   |
| AFI                       | Armed Forces Italy  |
| AFIS                      | American Forces Information Service   |
| AFRH                      | Armed Forces Retirement Home  |
| AOC                       | Architect of the Capitol  |
| ARC                       | Appalachian Regional Commission   |
|                           |   |
| BBG                       | U.S. Agency for Global Media  |
|                           |   |
| C                         | Department of Commerce  |
| CE                        | Corps of Engineers, Civil Works   |
| CF                        | U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission   |
| CP                        | U.S. Capitol Police   |
| CPSC                      | Consumer Product Safety Commission  |
| CS                        | Court Services & Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia   |
| CT                        | U.S. District Court   |
|                           |   |
| D                         | Department of Defense   |
| DA                        | Defense Contract Audit Agency   |
| DECA                      | Defense Commissary Agency   |
| DFC                       | U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (formally Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) as of 8/19/2019). |
| DHA                       | Defense Health Agency   |
| DHS                       | Department of Homeland Security   |
| DIA                       | Defense Intelligence Agency   |
| DISA                      | Defense Information Systems Agency  |
| DLA                       | Defense Logistics Agency  |
| DRA                       | Delta Regional Authority  |

|      |   |
|------|---|
| DOT  | Department of Transportation  |
|      |   |
| E    | Department of Energy  |
| EC   | U.S. Enrichment Corporation   |
| ED   | Department of Education   |
| EEOC | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  |
| EIB  | Export Import Bank  |
| EO   | Executive Office of the President<br>Council of Economic Advisors<br>National Security Council<br>Office of Management and Budget |
| EPA  | Environmental Protection Agency   |
| ERC  | Emergency Response & Continuity (House of Representatives)  |
|      |   |
| FC   | Federal Communications Commission   |
| FCA  | Farm Credit Administration  |
| FD   | Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation   |
| FHFA | Federal Housing Finance Agency  |
| FM   | Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service  |
| FRB  | The Federal Reserve Board   |
| FTC  | Federal Trade Commission  |
|      |   |
| G    | GSA Fleet   |
| GAO  | Government Accountability Office  |
| GP   | Government Printing Office  |
| GSA  | General Services Administration   |
|      |   |
| HHS  | Department of Health and Human Services   |
| HUD  | U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  |
|      |   |
| I    | Department of the Interior  |
| IA   | U.S. Information Agency   |
| ITC  | International Trade Commission  |
|      |   |
| J    | Department of Justice   |
| JB   | Judicial Branch   |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| JFKC | John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts   |
|      |  |
| L    | Department of Labor  |
| LA   | District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency   |
| LB   | Legislative Branch   |
| LC   | The Library of Congress  |
|      |  |
| MC   | U.S. Marine Corps  |
| MCC  | Millennium Challenge Corporation   |
| MSPB | U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board  |
|      |  |
| N    | Department of the Navy   |
| NA   | National Aeronautics and Space Administration  |
| NEA  | National Endowment for the Arts  |
| NG   | National Guard Bureau  |
| NGA  | National Gallery of Art  |
| NG   | National Guard Bureau  |
| NL   | National Labor Relations Board   |
| NP   | National Capital Planning Commission   |
| NRC  | Nuclear Regulatory Commission  |
| NS   | National Science Foundation  |
|      |  |
| OPIC | Overseas Private Investment Corporation. OPIC changed name to US International Development Finance Corporation as of 8/19/2019. New code is DFC. |
| OPM  | Office of Personnel Management   |
|      |  |
| P    | United States Postal Service   |
| PBG  | Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation   |
| PSA  | Pretrial Services Agency   |
| PT   | Presidio Trust   |
|      |  |
| RR   | Railroad Retirement Board  |
|      |  |
| S    | Department of State  |
| SAA  | United States Senate Sergeant at Arms  |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| SB    | Small Business Administration             |
| SC    | Defense Security Cooperation Agency       |
| SE    | U. S. Securities and Exchange Commission  |
| SH    | U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home          |
| SI    | Smithsonian Institution                   |
| S-IBC | International Broadcasting Bureau         |
| SS    | Selective Service System                  |
|       |   |
| T     | Department of the Treasury                |
| TV    | Tennessee Valley Authority                |
|       |   |
| U     | U.S. Agency for International Development |
| UPC   | Peace Corps                               |
|       |   |
| VA    | Department of Veterans Affairs            |
|       |   |
| W     | Army                                      |
|       |   |
| X     | Army & Air Force Exchange Service         |