



Department of the Secretary of State Bureau of Motor Vehicles

Matthew Dunlap
Secretary of State

Patty A. Morneault
Deputy Secretary of State

Stephen P. Ashcroft
Director of Vehicle Services

May 27, 2020

To: All Maine Law Enforcement
Re: Guidance on the NEW Temporary Registration Letter

On May 26, 2020, the Governor signed amended Executive Order #53-A mandating that vehicles required to be registered in this State after purchase or transfer of ownership, or for which a registration expires or has expired, be registered in accordance with deadlines established by the registering municipality. In short, if a municipality or Bureau of Motor Vehicle Office are open and able to register vehicles, the registrant must do so immediately. If an owner's municipality is not open for business, then the registration requirement remains extended.

As a result, a new Temporary Registration Letter, which is included in this correspondence, was needed to reflect the changes to the Governor's previous executive order. For vehicle owners whose municipalities are not yet open for business, the new letter will have the same effect as the previous Temporary Registration Letter dated March 27, 2020. Below are some points of clarification.

Q. Does the vehicle still have to have been purchased or transferred during the state of emergency for an extension or exemption?

A. Yes and no. If they are to be qualified for an extension or exemption, then it must have occurred during the state of emergency. Even if it was, it may not be eligible for an extension or exemption if their municipal office is able to collect the excise and perform the registration or they are capable of completing a registration by other means, i.e. Rapid Renewal or at a BMV branch office.

Q. What happens if the municipality is not open or does not participate in Rapid Renewal?

A. Then the registrant is extended or exempt until such time that their municipal office or BMV branch can perform the work. BMV branches will be operating under an appointment-only status and will not be able to accommodate all the overflow from municipalities.

Q. Can the vehicle operate without a plate?

A. Only if the vehicle is eligible for that exemption. i.e. The registrant purchased a vehicle through a private sale or obtained it through a transfer of ownership and their town cannot process a registration and doesn't participate in Rapid Renewal. The amended EO # 53-A allows for the municipality to set the deadline for registration so this may be different depending on each municipality.

Q. Can someone transfer the plate from an older vehicle onto the new vehicle until they can register?

A. No. The Temporary registration Letter allows operation without a certificate of registration and plates. Displaying plates assigned to another vehicle would constitute a separate crime and is not covered by the waiver.

Once again, we understand the difficulties in the enforcement aspect of this executive order. Certainly, municipal police departments will have the advantage in knowing what that particular municipality is performing for services, but County Sheriff's offices and the Maine State Police may have some difficulty in this area. There will be many questions still, but please understand the intent of this waiver and use your discretion.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Ash".

Stephen P. Ashcroft
Director of Vehicle Services
Bureau of Motor Vehicles
29 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0029

stephen.ashcroft@maine.gov