
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Motor vehicle registration and title

Additional motor vehicle registration and renewal fees

- Beginning January 1, 2026, increases the additional annual motor vehicle registration and renewal fees from \$11 to \$16 for noncommercial vehicles and from \$30 to \$35 for nonapportioned commercial vehicles.

Disabled veterans: registration transfer fee exemption

- Exempts a disabled veteran from the \$1 transfer fee that generally applies when a person transfers the registration and license plate from one vehicle to another if the license plate is:
 - A license plate honoring military service or a military award; or
 - A disabled veteran license plate.

BMV electronic and online transactions

- Authorizes the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and a deputy registrar to accept electronically:
 - Documents that are required to accompany the services and transactions that the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) conducts electronically or online; and
 - Documents approved by the Registrar for electronic or online submission and acceptance.
- Authorizes a person to apply for an initial motor vehicle registration and a transfer of motor vehicle registration through the online system established by the Registrar, similar to registration renewals under current law.
- Requires the Registrar or deputy registrar to verify and authenticate any associated documents submitted electronically with those registrations.
- Allocates the service fee and postage costs for those online and electronic submissions.

Vehicle registration by telephone

- Eliminates the requirement that the BMV accept motor vehicle registration renewal payments via telephone.

Blackout license plate

- Beginning January 1, 2026, authorizes the BMV to issue “Blackout” license plates, which have a black background with white lettering.
- Specifies that Blackout license plates will not include the phrase “Birthplace of Aviation” or display county identification stickers.
- Requires payment of a \$40 Blackout license plate fee and a \$10 administrative fee for the purchasing of a Blackout license plate.

Commercial motor vehicle laws

Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse notifications

- Updates Ohio commercial motor vehicle laws to reflect federal requirements related to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse (DAC) notifications to the Registrar, as follows:
 - Prohibits a commercial driver's license temporary instruction permit (CLP) or commercial driver's license (CDL) holder from operating a commercial motor vehicle if the holder has violated certain alcohol or controlled substances prohibitions;
 - Prohibits the Registrar from issuing, renewing, or upgrading a CLP or CDL if the Registrar receives notice from DAC of that alcohol or controlled substance violation;
 - Establishes procedures for the Registrar to downgrade or reinstate, as necessary, a CLP or CDL based on notices from DAC.

Limited term commercial driver's license

- Modifies the law governing a CDL issued to a temporary resident to do all of the following:
 - Exclude the license as a form of photo identification for purposes of voting;
 - Make it consistent with the federal REAL ID Act and state law for the issuance of a standard limited term license;
 - Clarify that the expiration date is either the expiration date of the holder's authorized stay in the U.S. or four years, whichever date is earliest, or is one year if there is no expiration date of the temporary resident's authorized stay in the U.S.;
 - Authorizes the renewal of the limited term CDL within 180 days of its expiration, provided the temporary resident can verify his or her continued lawful status in the U.S.; and
 - Specifies that the renewal may not take place through the BMV's online service, but must be conducted in person at a deputy registrar agency.

Driver's license and state identification card laws

Medically restricted driver's license

- Eliminates the six-month validity period for a medically restricted driver's license and instead requires the Registrar to determine the validity period.

Ohio credential reprints

- Allows a person to obtain from the BMV up to two reprints of an Ohio credential (e.g., driver's license, CDL, identification card) between initial issuance and renewal of the credential or between renewals.
- Requires payment of a \$100 administrative fee for issuance of an expedited credential, in addition to all regular fees, taxes, and mailing costs.

Expedited Ohio credential

- Beginning January 1, 2026, allows the BMV to offer an expedited process for issuing an Ohio credential.

Driver training requirements

- Extends to persons ages 18 to 21 the requirement to complete the full driver's education course and 50 hours of practice driving with an eligible adult to obtain an initial driver's license, instead of just persons under 18.
- Modifies the abbreviated driver training course for adults to apply to individuals 21 and older.
- Authorizes a beginning driver to complete the driver's education course at any point while holding a temporary instruction permit.

Request for administrative hearing

- Extends, from 10 to 15 days, the time by which a person may request an administrative hearing after a driver's license suspension order is issued by the Registrar for failure to have proof of financial responsibility (i.e., motor vehicle insurance).

Law enforcement tows

- Requires the payment of towing and storage fees for vehicles ordered towed by law enforcement in all circumstances with no exceptions.

Trailers

- Excludes trailers from the Motor Vehicle Dealers Law, except fifth wheel trailers, park trailers, travel trailers, tent-type fold-out camping trailers, or semitrailers.

Emergency management assistance compact immunity

- Applies the immunity provisions related to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which currently apply only to an employee of a political subdivision rendering aid in another state, to any person deployed to render aid in another state by an emergency management agency, including:
 - A full-time or part-time employee of a nonprofit organization; or
 - A paid or unpaid volunteer or health care worker of a for-profit or nonprofit organization.

Emergency service provider "retired" designation

- Requires the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services to establish procedures by which a certificate holder maybe designated as "retired" in the Board's records.

Nuclear power plant security

- Excludes certain security personnel and contractors at a commercial nuclear power plant from the continuing law licensure requirement to engage in the business of security services.

Motor vehicle registration and title

Additional motor vehicle registration and renewal fees

(R.C. 4503.10; Section 373.40)

The bill increases the additional annual motor vehicle registration and renewal fees beginning on January 1, 2026, as follows:

1. From \$11 to \$16 for noncommercial vehicles; and
2. From \$30 to \$35 for nonapportioned commercial vehicles, which are generally intrastate commercial motor vehicles not subject to international registration plan (IRP) requirements.

Under current law, a motor vehicle owner must pay several different fees at the time of registration. The fees listed above involve one component of the overall cost of registering a motor vehicle, and are used to defray the Department of Public Safety's (DPS) costs associated with the administration and enforcement of Ohio Motor Vehicle and Traffic Laws. This increase is expressly allocated for use by the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

Disabled veterans: registration transfer fee exemption

(R.C. 4503.29 and 4503.41)

The bill exempts a disabled veteran from the \$1 transfer fee that generally applies when a person transfers the registration and license plate from one vehicle to another if the license plate is either a license plate honoring military service or a military award or the "Disabled Veteran" license plate.

Under current law, a disabled veteran with a service-connected disability rated at 100% by the federal Veterans' Administration may register the veteran's personal vehicle and obtain a "Disabled Veteran" license plate. Further, the disabled veteran may register their vehicle and obtain specified license plates honoring military service or military awards. In both instances, the disabled veteran is exempt from all fees associated with vehicle registration and license plates, except the transfer fee referenced above.¹³³

¹³³ R.C. 4503.12, not in the bill.

BMV electronic and online transactions

(R.C. 4501.027 and 4503.102)

Under current law, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles may conduct, or allow a deputy registrar to conduct, any service or transaction provided by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) in an electronic or an online format rather than in person. Initially, BMV's online services involved motor vehicle registration renewals. In recent years, the online services have expanded to include taking the driver's knowledge tests, updating a residential or mailing address, scheduling driving skills tests, and renewing a driver's license or identification card.

The bill further expands the BMV's options for electronic and online transactions by authorizing the Registrar and deputy registrars to accept electronically both:

- The documents that are required to accompany the services and transactions that the BMV conducts electronically or online; and
- The documents approved by the Registrar for electronic or online submission and acceptance.

The expansion allows certain services and transactions that require document authentication (e.g., initial motor vehicle registration) to be conducted online or electronically.

Online initial and transfer of motor vehicle registration

Relatedly, the bill authorizes a person to apply for an initial motor vehicle registration or a transfer of a motor vehicle registration through the BMV's online system. As stated above, a person may use the online system for motor vehicle registration renewal, but under current law, initial and transfer registrations must be conducted in person at a deputy registrar agency. The initial and transfer registrations transactions typically involve additional document verifications (e.g., checks of a certificate of title or memorandum of title) that have made it necessary for the transaction to occur in person. However, with the authorization for electronic and online submission of documents, the transactions can also occur through the BMV online system.

The bill requires the Registrar or a deputy registrar to verify and authenticate the associated documents for the initial or transfer registration that are submitted electronically. An applicant who uses the online system will still need to pay the regular costs and fees, including the service fee, postage costs, and any financial transaction device surcharges (i.e., credit card fees). Accordingly, the bill allocates the \$5 deputy registrar or BMV service fee to whoever verifies and authenticates the documents and allocates the postage costs to whoever mails the certificate of registration and any associated license plates to the applicant.

Vehicle registration by phone

(R.C. 4503.102)

The bill eliminates the requirement that the BMV accept motor vehicle registration renewal payments via telephone. The bill retains the requirement that motor vehicle registrations may be renewed by mail or electronic means.

Blackout license plate

(R.C. 4503.511)

The bill creates the “Blackout” license plate, which has a black background with white lettering. The plate will not include the phrase “Birthplace of Aviation” or display county identification stickers, both of which are required for standard license plates. Beginning January 1, 2026, a Blackout license plate can be purchased for a passenger car, noncommercial motor vehicle, recreational vehicle, or other vehicle of a class approved by the Registrar. The fee for the plate is \$40 plus an additional \$10 BMV administrative fee, both of which must be deposited into the Public Safety – Highway Purposes Fund.

Commercial motor vehicle laws

Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse notifications

(R.C. 4506.01, 4506.05, 4506.07, and 4506.13)

The bill updates the Ohio Commercial Motor Vehicle Laws to reflect recent changes to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse (DAC) notifications that are sent to the Registrar. Specifically, effective as of November 18, 2024, states must request information from DAC about individuals applying for, renewing, or attempting to upgrade a commercial driver’s license temporary instruction permit (CLP) or commercial driver’s license (CDL). If in response to the request, DAC notifies the Registrar that the applicant is prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle because of a violation of certain alcohol or controlled substances prohibitions, the Registrar is prohibited from issuing, renewing, or upgrading that CLP or CDL.¹³⁴

Under current federal law and under the bill, a CLP or CDL holder is prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle if the holder has violated the federal alcohol or controlled substance prohibitions. The prohibitions relate to using alcohol or prohibited controlled substances before reporting for work, during work, or for a specified time after a motor vehicle accident. Work encompasses both the active driving of a commercial motor vehicle or performing safety-sensitive functions (e.g., inspecting equipment, waiting to be dispatched, loading or unloading a vehicle, or repairing a vehicle).¹³⁵

In addition to the active checks at issuance, renewal, and upgrade, if the Registrar receives a notification from DAC that a current CLP or CDL holder has violated the alcohol and controlled substances prohibitions, the Registrar must take steps to downgrade the holder’s CLP or CDL within 60 days of the notice. The bill establishes those downgrade procedures.

Specifically, the Registrar must initiate downgrade procedures within ten calendar days after receiving the notice from DAC. The Registrar must notify the subject CLP or CDL holder that the holder’s permit or license will be downgraded if that holder does not resolve the prohibition within 30 days. Resolution of the prohibition involves following federal procedures with a

¹³⁴ 49 C.F.R. 383.73

¹³⁵ 49 C.F.R. 382, subpart B.

Substance Abuse Professional for evaluation, referral, and education/treatment.¹³⁶ If the holder does not resolve the prohibition, the Registrar must:

- Downgrade the CLP or CDL, meaning that while the person may operate a standard motor vehicle, the person is prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle;
- Send a second notice to the holder informing the holder of the downgrade and that the holder must take the steps necessary to reinstate the commercial driving privileges; and
- Record the downgrade on the person’s Commercial Driver’s License Information System (CDLIS) driver record.

Similar to the downgrade procedures, the bill also establishes reinstatement procedures that apply when DAC informs the Registrar that a CLP or CDL holder is no longer prohibited from operating a commercial motor vehicle. Specifically:

- If the Registrar receives the notice before the holder’s permit or license has been downgraded, the Registrar must terminate the downgrade process and notify the holder of the termination;
- If the Registrar receives the notice after the downgrade, the Registrar must reinstate the CLP or CDL, provided the person is otherwise eligible for reinstatement and commercial driving privileges;
- If the Registrar receives notice that the holder was erroneously identified by DAC, in addition to reinstating the permit or license, the Registrar must remove any record of the downgrade from the person’s CDLIS driver record and motor vehicle driving record.

Limited term commercial driver’s license

(R.C. 3501.01, 4506.14, 4507.061, and 4507.09)

The bill modifies the law governing a CDL issued to a temporary resident to make it consistent with current law governing the standard limited term license and limited term identification card issued to temporary residents. Temporary residents generally are persons who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents but *have legal presence* to reside in the U.S. under federal immigration laws. The changes ensure that these CDLs conform to the federal REAL ID Act.¹³⁷ Consistent with that Act and current state law for the limited term license, the bill does the following:

1. Renames the “nonrenewable commercial driver’s license” to a “limited term commercial driver’s license”;
2. Excludes the limited term CDL as a form of photo identification for purposes of voting;

¹³⁶ 49 C.F.R. 40, subpart O, as referenced in 49 C.F.R. 382.503.

¹³⁷ “Real ID Act,” 49 U.S.C. 30301, *et seq.*, 6 C.F.R. Part 37.

3. Clarifies that the expiration date is either the expiration date of the holder's authorized stay in the U.S. or four years, whichever date is earliest, or is one year if there is no expiration date of the temporary resident's authorized stay in the U.S.;

4. Authorizes the renewal of the limited term CDL within 180 days of its expiration, provided the temporary resident can verify his or her continued lawful status in the U.S.; and

5. Requires the renewal of the limited term CDL to be conducted in person at a deputy registrar agency, rather than through the BMV's online service.

Driver's license laws

Medically restricted driver's license

(R.C. 4507.08)

The bill eliminates the six-month validity period for a medically restricted temporary instruction permit or driver's license. Instead, it specifies that the Registrar must determine the validity period of that license. The Registrar may issue a restricted license to a person who is subject to any condition that causes episodic impairment of consciousness or loss of muscular control if that person presents a statement from a licensed physician that the person's condition is dormant or under effective medical control.

Ohio credential reprints

(R.C. 4507.40)

The bill allows a person to obtain from the BMV up to two reprints of an Ohio credential between initial issuance and renewal or between renewals. Current law limits individuals to one reprint during those time periods. Reprinted credentials are generally issued when a credential is lost, destroyed, or mutilated.

Under current law, "Ohio credential" is a temporary instruction permit identification card, driver's license, CDL, motorcycle operator's license, motorized bicycle license, or state identification card issued by the BMV.

Expedited Ohio credential

(R.C. 4507.41)

Beginning January 1, 2026, the bill allows a current holder of a valid Ohio credential to receive it via an expedited process. To receive an expedited Ohio credential, a person must pay a \$100 administrative fee in addition to all regular fees, taxes, and mailing costs. The Registrar must determine the mailing costs and the manner by which an Ohio credential is mailed. The \$100 fee and mailing costs must be deposited into the Public Safety – Highway Purposes Fund. The Registrar may adopt rules for purposes of implementing the expedited credential program.

Driver training requirements

(R.C. 4507.21 and 4508.02)

The bill requires all individuals under 21, instead of under 18 as under current law, to complete the full driver's education course and the 50 hours of practice driving with an eligible

adult in order to obtain an initial driver's license. The full driver's education course consists of 24 hours of classroom instruction (either in person or online) and eight hours of behind-the-wheel training with a licensed instructor. The adults eligible to oversee the practice driving include a parent, guardian, custodian, or person who is 21 or older who acts in loco parentis of the driver's license applicant. The eligible adult must sign an affidavit attesting that the 50 hours were completed, with at least ten of those hours completed at night. That affidavit is presented at the time that the applicant applies for his or her initial driver's license, along with proof of successful completion of the driver's education course.

Relatedly, the bill modifies the requirements for the abbreviated driver training course for adults to apply it to individuals 21 and older, rather than 18 and older, as under current law. The abbreviated driver training course is required if an individual above the applicable age fails the road or maneuverability test and has not completed a driver's education course in the 12 months preceding the application.

Additionally, the bill expressly authorizes a beginning driver to complete the driver education course at any point while holding a valid temporary instruction permit. These permits are valid for one year after issuance.

Request for administrative hearing

(R.C. 4509.101)

Under current law, when the Registrar imposes a driver's license suspension on a person for failure to have proof of financial responsibility, the Registrar is not required to hold a hearing on the suspension in advance of its imposition. However, a person adversely affected by the Registrar's order may request an administrative hearing regarding the suspension. The person must make the request within ten days after the order is issued. The bill extends that time to 15 days to make the timeline consistent with other instances in which a person may request an administrative hearing based on the Registrar's orders.

Law enforcement tows

(R.C. 4513.60, 4513.61, and 4513.66)

The bill requires the payment of towing and storage fees for vehicles that are towed by a law enforcement order in all circumstances and with no exceptions. Under current law, the Victim's Rights Law requires a law enforcement agency that is investigating a criminal offense or a delinquent act to do both of the following:

- Promptly return any of the victim's property that was taken during the investigation; and
- Not compel the victim to pay any charges as a condition of retrieving that property.¹³⁸

As a result of this law, when a stolen motor vehicle is in an accident, is abandoned, or is otherwise ordered towed and removed into storage by law enforcement, the owner is not required to pay the towing and storage fees that typically must be paid as a condition of retrieval.

¹³⁸ R.C. 2930.11, not in the bill.

The same exemption applies to other motor vehicles that are a part of a crime or delinquent act and are ordered towed and into storage by law enforcement and their owner is the victim of that crime or act.

The bill expressly states that the Victim's Rights Law does not apply to the payment of fees for motor vehicles that are removed and stored by order of law enforcement. Thus, motor vehicle owners who would otherwise qualify as a victim of a crime or a delinquent act will be required to pay the towing and storage fees. If either the offender or the victim has insurance that covers the fees, that insurance company may provide that payment for retrieval. However, owners without insurance or without that form of coverage will be required to pay the towing and storage fees as a result of the bill's removal of the current law exemption.

Trailers

(R.C. 4517.01)

The bill specifically excludes the sale of trailers from the Motor Vehicle Dealers Law (MVDL). As a result, a person does not need a motor vehicle dealer's license to sell, display, or otherwise conduct business with respect to trailers. However, the bill specifies that fifth wheel trailers, park trailers, travel trailers, tent-type fold-out camping trailers, or semitrailers remain subject to the MVDL.

Current law requires most motor vehicles to be sold by licensed dealers under the MVDL. Beyond licensing requirements for dealers, the MVDL also establishes requirements for motor vehicle distributors, wholesalers, auction owners, and salespersons and requirements governing motor vehicle dealer franchise agreements.

Emergency management assistance compact immunity

(R.C. 5502.30)

The bill applies the immunity provisions related to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which currently apply only to employees of a political subdivision rendering aid in another state, to any person deployed to render aid in another state by an emergency management agency, including:

- A full-time or part-time employee of a nonprofit organization; or
- A paid or unpaid volunteer or health care worker of a for-profit or nonprofit organization.

In addition to the provisions above, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, to which Ohio is a member state, includes a specific immunity provision. That provision states that officers or employees of a member state rendering aid in another state pursuant to the Compact are considered agents of the requesting state for tort liability and immunity purposes and generally are not liable for good faith actions taken when rendering aid.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ R.C. 5502.40, not in the bill.

Emergency service provider “retired” designation

(R.C. 4765.11 and 4765.55)

The bill requires the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services to adopt rules establishing procedures by which any of the following individuals may request the individual’s employer to instruct the Board to designate the individual as “retired” in the Board’s records when the individual retires:

- A first responder;
- An emergency medical technician (EMT)-basic;
- An EMT-intermediate; or
- An EMT-paramedic.

The bill also requires the Executive Director of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services to adopt similar rules allowing a firefighter or fire safety inspector to request the individual’s employer instruct the Director to designate the individual as “retired.” Under continuing law, the Director must seek the advice and counsel of the Firefighter and Fire Safety Inspector Training Committee of the Board when adopting rules applicable to firefighters and fire inspectors.

The bill exempts rules adopted by the Board and Director relating to the “retired” designation from the law concerning reductions in regulatory restrictions. Currently, the Board is housed within DPS and DPS must take actions to reduce regulatory restrictions, including, by June 30, 2025, reducing the number of regulatory restrictions contained in an inventory created in 2019 in accordance with a statutory schedule. Additionally, beginning July 1, 2025, DPS cannot adopt a rule containing a regulatory restriction if doing so would cause the state to exceed the state cap on regulatory restrictions. A “regulatory restriction” is any part of an administrative rule that requires or prohibits an action.¹⁴⁰

Nuclear power plant security

(R.C. 4749.01)

The bill excludes security personnel and contractors for a security organization under a federally approved physical protection program at a commercial nuclear power plant while performing duties related to protecting the plant and nuclear material from threats, thefts, and sabotage from the continuing law licensure requirement to engage in the business of security services. Under continuing law, a person generally must hold a license to engage in the business of security services, unless an exception applies.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ R.C. 121.95 to 121.953, not in the bill.

¹⁴¹ R.C. 4749.13, not in the bill.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission approves physical protection programs at commercial nuclear power plants as a condition of licensure to operate under federal law.¹⁴²

¹⁴² 10 C.F.R. Part 73.