



H.B. 225

123rd General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Rep. Sykes

BILL SUMMARY

- Authorizes the issuance of a Professional Firefighter license plate inscribed with a Maltese cross emblem.
- Prohibits any person who is not an active or retired professional firefighter from having Professional Firefighter license plates on a vehicle the person owns.
- Prohibits any person who is not a professional firefighter from representing that he is a professional firefighter to obtain the license plates.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Professional Firefighter license plates

(sec. 4503.471(A) and (C))

Under the bill, any person who is a professional firefighter may apply to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles for the registration of any passenger car, noncommercial motor vehicle, recreational vehicle, or other vehicle of a class approved by the Registrar and may obtain Professional Firefighter license plates. The bill defines "professional firefighter" as any person who is "actively engaged" in the profession of firefighting, although a person who is retired from the profession of firefighting and who had professional firefighter license plates while actively engaged in the profession may continue to renew the registration and retain the plates.

The application for the license plates must be accompanied by written evidence, as required by the Registrar by rule, showing that the person is a professional firefighter. The application for the license plates may be combined

with a request for a special reserved license plate (also commonly known as "vanity plates") provided in current law.

Upon receipt of the completed application, payment of the applicable taxes and fees as explained below, and presentation of the evidence of professional firefighter status, the Registrar is required to issue to the applicant the appropriate vehicle registration and a set of Professional Firefighter license plates with a validation sticker, or a validation sticker alone once the person already has Professional Firefighter plates.

In addition to the letters and numbers ordinarily inscribed on license plates, Professional Firefighter license plates must be inscribed with a Maltese cross emblem designed by the International Association of Firefighters and approved by the Registrar. The license plates must bear county identification stickers that identify the county of registration by name or number.

Professional Firefighter license plates and validation sticker are issued upon payment of the regular state and local taxes and fees prescribed in current law, a fee of \$10 for the purpose of compensating the Bureau of Motor Vehicles for additional services required in the issuing of Professional Firefighter license plates, and compliance with all other applicable laws relating to the registration of motor vehicles. If the application for Professional Firefighter license plates is combined with a request for a vanity plate, the applicant also must pay the additional fee specified for those plates. The Registrar is required to deposit the additional \$10 fee in the existing State Bureau of Motor Vehicles Fund.

Whenever a person no longer is eligible for the Professional Firefighter license plates, the bill requires the person to surrender the plates in exchange for other license plates and authorizes a \$3 fee to be charged for issuing the replacement plates. The chief of a fire department or the fire chief is required to immediately notify the Registrar whenever any person under the chief's supervision no longer is a professional firefighter, whether or not the person had the special plates at the time of leaving the profession. However, the bill specifies that the notification does not need to be made when a person retires from the profession of firefighting.

Prohibitions

(secs. 4503.471(B) and 4503.99(A))

The bill prohibits any person who is not a professional firefighter from willfully and falsely representing that the person is a professional firefighter for the purpose of obtaining Professional Firefighter license plates. Also, no person may own a vehicle bearing Professional Firefighter license plates unless the person is eligible to be issued the license plates. Violation of either of these prohibitions is a minor misdemeanor.

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE	JOURNAL ENTRY
Introduced	03-03-99	p. 262

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