

# Military Guide

## Military Special Plates

The Virginia DMV offers more than 30 different special plates that let you show your military pride.

When you title and register your vehicle in Virginia, go to [www.dmvNOW.com](http://www.dmvNOW.com), check out Military Special Plates, and display them proudly.



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# Military Guide



Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles  
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Richmond, Virginia 23269-0001  
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Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles welcomes the men and women of the military stationed in the Commonwealth.

## Driver's Licenses, Learner's Permits and ID Cards

If you are an active duty member of the military stationed in Virginia, you, your spouse and dependent children may drive with a valid driver's license issued by your home state or country. You are not required to obtain a Virginia driver's license; however, if you choose to apply, you will need documents to prove:

- ▶ Identity
- ▶ Virginia residency
- ▶ Legal presence – either U.S. citizenship or legal authorization by the federal government to be in the U.S.
- ▶ Social security number

Visit [www.dmvNOW.com](http://www.dmvNOW.com) for a complete list of documents DMV will accept. Use the online interactive document guide or see the brochure entitled "Obtaining a Virginia Driver's License or ID Card" (DMV 141).

## Residency Documents

Active duty military member assigned to a unit based in Virginia may present one of the following:

- ▶ Letter from commanding officer on official letterhead, with an original signature, stating that the applicant resides onboard a ship docked in Virginia or in a barracks located in Virginia
- ▶ Orders from the U.S. military assigning the applicant to a military unit with a Virginia address
- ▶ Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) displaying Virginia as applicant's home of record

### Secondary Proof of Virginia Residency Documents

- ▶ Postmarked mail displaying the applicant's name and current address
- ▶ Official correspondence from a federal, state, or local government agency displaying the applicant's name and current address (DMV issued documents without postmarked envelopes are not accepted)
- ▶ Billing statement or other official document from a recognizable business or government agency displaying the applicant's name and current address

Spouses and dependents listed on military orders can use the orders and their unexpired military dependent ID card as proof of residency. Applicants under age 19 may have a parent or legal guardian certify their Virginia residency. The parent or legal guardian must appear in person with the applicant, and provide a photo identification card and proof of their Virginia residency.

## License Extensions

Members of the military and certain individuals may request an extension of their Virginia driver's license. Note: Commercial driver's licenses are not eligible for extensions.

These include:

- ▶ Active duty members of the U.S. military who are deployed outside of Virginia and plan to return

- ▶ Members of the U.S. diplomatic service who are serving outside of the U.S.
- ▶ A civilian employee of the U.S. government, or any agency or contractor serving outside of the U.S. on behalf of the U.S. government
- ▶ The spouses and dependents of any of the above

One extension may be granted with the required documentation and will be valid for three years. A driver whose license is extended will be given an extension card to carry with the expired license. This card indicates that the extension is valid for up to three years, or for 180 days after the driver returns to Virginia, whichever occurs first. A military extension packet may be requested by mail. Requests can be mailed to DMV Driver's License and ID Card Work Center, P.O. Box 27412, Richmond, VA 23269.

Return the following:

- ▶ A completed driver's license and identification card application (form DL 1P)
- ▶ A copy of the service member's military identification card
- ▶ A copy of military orders or a certification letter, on U. S. government letterhead signed by the commanding officer/supervisor

These documents should contain the name of the person requesting the extension, and should state that the customer is an active duty member of the military (or a spouse or dependent) stationed outside of Virginia.

## Troops to Trucks<sup>SM</sup>

Through the Troops to Trucks<sup>SM</sup> program, DMV is helping service men and women obtain tools for future employment in the transportation industry. If you have at least two years military truck driving experience and a military CDL, DMV waives the skills test—one less test and one step toward getting a Virginia CDL. Need experience? Classroom and behind-the-wheel training may be available on post. Additional information is available at [www.dmvNOW.com/T2T](http://www.dmvNOW.com/T2T).

## Motorcycle Classification

An active duty member of the military, or a spouse or dependent of an active duty member, who has successfully completed a basic motorcycle rider training course approved by the United States Armed Services within the past year is exempt from the Virginia motorcycle knowledge and skills tests when adding a Virginia motorcycle designation to your valid Virginia driver's license. When you apply for a motorcycle designation, you will need to provide a copy of your active duty military identification card and submit your U.S. military-approved basic motorcycle rider training course certificate.

You will be required to pay a \$20 license replacement fee and the \$2-per-year motorcycle classification fee for each year of validity remaining on their driver's license. Additional information is available at [www.dmvNOW.com/military](http://www.dmvNOW.com/military).

## Veteran Indicator on Your Driver's License

Thousands of Virginia retailers offer veterans discounts and other benefits. You can easily show your veteran status by having an indicator added to your Virginia driver's license or ID card.

To be eligible for the veteran indicator, you must have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and received an honorable discharge; hold an unexpired Virginia driver's license, commercial driver's license, learner's permit or DMV-issued ID card; and present DMV with a copy of a document (or a combination of documents) that indicate branch of service, discharge date, and discharge status. For full eligibility requirements, visit [www.dmvNOW.com/veteranindicator](http://www.dmvNOW.com/veteranindicator).

You will receive your new Virginia driver's license or ID card with the veteran indicator in the mail about a week after you submit your discharge documentation.

For information on resources available to Virginia veterans, review the Virginia Veterans Resource Guide developed by the Department of Veterans Services on their website at [www.dvs.virginia.gov](http://www.dvs.virginia.gov).

## Vehicle Titling and Registration

### Purchasing a New Vehicle

While stationed in Virginia, if you purchase a vehicle, you may title and register that vehicle in your home state, or you may title and register the vehicle in Virginia. Vehicles titled and registered in your name may be driven with valid out-of-state license plates if you are the sole owner. If the vehicle is co-owned and out-of-state plates are used, all co-owners must be active duty members of the Armed Forces. If all the co-owners are not active duty members, the vehicle will need to be registered in Virginia.

To title a vehicle in Virginia, submit the following to DMV:

- ▶ A completed Application for Certificate of Title and Registration (form VSA 17A). Be sure to check "yes" to the question that asks if the applicant is an active member of the military.
- ▶ Proof of address
- ▶ The previous owner's title signed over to you if the vehicle is used. Or, you may have the previous owner of the out-of-state vehicle assign the title to you. If you are titling a vehicle from another state, bring your title from your previous state of residence. Your name must appear on the out-of-state title as owner.
- ▶ Your social security number, if you have one.

If there is a lien on the vehicle, the title will be mailed to the lien holder and you will receive a registration card and license plates. If there is no lien on the vehicle, you will receive the Virginia title.

### Title and Registration Fees

When titling your vehicle in Virginia, you are required to pay a title fee and the 4.15 percent motor vehicle sales and use tax that is based on the vehicle's sale price. There is a \$75 minimum tax. If you hold a valid, assignable title or registration issued in your name by another state or branch of the military, you will not have to pay the motor vehicle sales and use tax. However, if you purchased the vehicle within the preceding 12 months, to be exempt in Virginia you must provide proof that the sales and use tax was paid elsewhere.

Your registration fee is determined by the empty weight/gross weight of your vehicle, the type of license plate you purchase and the number of years (one or two) you register your vehicle. Customers

receive a \$2 discount when they register for two years. Owners of vehicles garaged in the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William or Stafford, or the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas or Manassas Park must pay an additional annual \$2 emissions fee. Renew your vehicle registration (decals) at [www.dmvNOW.com](http://www.dmvNOW.com), via telephone or mail. A \$1 discount is applied when you renew online. A \$5 fee is added to registration renewals conducted in a DMV customer service center.

### Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act and Your Vehicle

Virginia law allows you to indicate on your vehicle registration application or renewal that you are a military member. This can provide additional protection in the event your vehicle has a lien placed against it requiring a court order granting enforcement of the lien. This protection is an important consideration, especially during a deployment. It is provided under the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act.

### Insurance Requirements

You may title and register your vehicle in Virginia without obtaining a Virginia driver's license, but before you put plates on your vehicle and drive on the road, your vehicle will need to be inspected and insured. All Virginia drivers must carry the minimum insurance requirements on their vehicle, or pay the Uninsured Motor Vehicle fee, before registering a vehicle in Virginia. Your insurance carrier must be authorized to conduct business in Virginia. Virginia requires the following minimum coverage:

- ▶ Bodily injury/death of one person: \$25,000
- ▶ Bodily injury/death of two or more persons: \$50,000
- ▶ Property damage: \$20,000

The \$500 Uninsured Motor Vehicle fee, which is paid to DMV, does not provide insurance. It only allows you to drive an uninsured vehicle at your own risk. It expires with your vehicle's registration and must be paid when renewing your registration.

### Imported Vehicles

For imported vehicles, military personnel or U. S. residents returning from a foreign country must complete CBP Form 3299, a Declaration for Free Entry of Unaccompanied Articles. The vehicle make and identification number (VIN) must be specified on the CBP Form 3299.

Foreign military members stationed at military installations in Virginia under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) may register your vehicles for the length of your tour of duty only. A copy of your orders must be presented to determine the length of your tour of duty.

### Other Vehicle Information

To ensure your vehicle is mechanically safe to operate in Virginia, it must pass an annual vehicle safety inspection. Trailers with separate braking systems must also be inspected.

In general, active duty military members returning to Virginia from an official absence have 14 calendar days to obtain a current vehicle safety inspection sticker. For more information about Virginia's inspection requirements, contact the Virginia State Police at [www.vsp.virginia.gov](http://www.vsp.virginia.gov) or (804) 674-6774.

## Deactivating License Plates

If you operate vehicles registered in Virginia for only part of the year, you may temporarily deactivate your license plates and cancel the insurance without having to surrender the license plates to DMV. This allows service men and women to deactivate their license plates and cancel insurance during deployment. It is illegal to operate any motor vehicle with deactivated plates.

To reactivate the plates, you must:

- ▶ have no outstanding tax obligations on your motor vehicle
- ▶ provide insurance policy information or pay the uninsured motor vehicle fee
- ▶ pay a \$10 reactivation fee (if the registration has not expired)

License plates can be deactivated and reactivated at [www.dmvNOW.com](http://www.dmvNOW.com).

## DITY Move Weigh-In

Active duty military members in the process of a do-it-yourself (DITY) move can bring a vehicle to any of DMV's 13 Motor Carrier Service Centers (MCSC) to be weighed. DMV will provide a weight ticket free of charge. MCSC locations are listed at [www.dmvNOW.com/MCSCs](http://www.dmvNOW.com/MCSCs).

## Mailing Address

DMV requires a valid United States Postal Service (USPS) mailing address. This may be your dwelling address or, if mail cannot be delivered to your dwelling address, you may also provide DMV with an alternate mailing address. Some on-post housing, such as military barracks, may not be recognized by the USPS. If you are unsure, please check with your Unit Official Mail Manager.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: Do I have to be a Virginia resident to title and register a vehicle in Virginia?

A: No. However, you are required to provide proof of the address you provided on DMV's Application for Certificate of Title and Registration (form VSA 17A).

### Q: Does a vehicle have to be titled in Virginia in order to be registered in Virginia?

A: Yes.

### Q: If I live off base or off post, what documents will I need to verify proof of address to get a Virginia title and register a vehicle?

A: Normally, an original lease or mortgage agreement, or an electric, cable or phone bill, which lists your physical address, are acceptable.

### Q: What sales taxes are required when titling a vehicle in Virginia?

A: Everyone is required to pay a 4.15 percent or a minimum of \$75 sales and use tax when purchasing and titling a vehicle in Virginia. However, if the purchased vehicle is eligible to be titled and registered in the applicant's home state, and the applicant elects to do so, no sales tax will be paid to Virginia. If the vehicle was not purchased in Virginia, but will be titled and registered here, sales and use tax at the above rate is due on the fair market value of the vehicle unless the following conditions are met:

- ▶ The vehicle is being registered for the first time in Virginia;
- ▶ The applicant holds a valid title or registration issued to him/her by another state or a branch of the U. S. Armed Forces; and
- ▶ The applicant has either owned the vehicle for longer than 12 months or provides evidence of a sales tax paid to another state.

### Q: What personal property taxes are required in Virginia?

A: Any person who is active duty military is exempt from taxation if their legal residence or domicile is outside of Virginia, pursuant to the Federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If the spouse of an active duty military person is not a Virginia resident and has the same domicile as the person on active military duty, then the spouse is exempt from taxation. The vehicle may be registered in the name of either the active duty military person or the active duty military person's spouse, individually or in both names, jointly. If the vehicle is jointly owned with anyone other than the active duty military person and/or his/her spouse and the co-owner is not on active military duty, the vehicle is taxable. Property taxes are administered by localities, not DMV. Contact your locality for more information.

### Q: Am I required to pay a license fee to my county or city?

A: Depending on your location, you may have to pay a license fee, which is sometimes referred to as county or city "decals." City and county license fees are handled by localities, not DMV. Contact your locality for more information.

### Q: Do I need to notify DMV if I am deployed to another area and want to cancel my insurance on vehicles I have registered in Virginia?

A: Yes, even if you are deployed outside of Virginia, you must notify DMV of insurance cancellations, and tag and license plate deactivation. If your tags are still valid, they must be surrendered to DMV.

### Q: What if I am required to attend driver improvement clinic in connection with my Virginia driver's license, but I am not stationed near a driver improvement clinic?

A: If you are a member of the military or a dependent, you may be eligible for an extension. The extension may be granted only if the military member or dependent is stationed outside Virginia in a jurisdiction that does not offer an approved eight-hour driver improvement clinic. The military person or dependent must provide a copy of military papers indicating military status, assigned station and the date of return to Virginia. The clinic completion date may be extended to 90 days after the date of return. For more information, call the Driver License Compliance Work Center at 804-367-1556 or visit <http://www.dmvNOW.com/webdoc/citizen/drivers/backonroad.asp#clinics>.