

== Alabama Department of Revenue ==

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Retired Military Tag Requirements Change August 1, Other Military Tag Options Available

Montgomery, July 18, 2000—Legislation passed during the 2000 Regular Session brings changes to several of Alabama's distinctive military tag qualification requirements beginning August 1, announced State Revenue Commissioner Michael L. Patterson.

“Significant changes were made in qualification requirements for the retired military distinctive tags and the Medal of Honor license plate, making the tags available to more Alabamians. Other new tag laws provide for the first distinctive military handicap license plate, offered to qualified recipients, as well as personalized and retired National Guard license plates,” said Patterson.

Summaries of the new tag laws, effective Aug. 1, 2000, are detailed below.

Act 2000-754, Retired Military License Plates and Retired National Guard License Plates:

Beginning Aug. 1, all United States military retirees—except those retired due to a disability—may obtain the U.S. Armed Forces Retired license plate. The new law removes the 20-year service requirement needed to obtain the U.S. Armed Forces Retired license plate and allows military retirees, providing proof of retirement, to obtain the distinctive license plate, regardless of their length of military service. The cost of the U.S. Armed Forces Retired license plate is \$23 per year, plus a local issuance fee. An additional \$3 fee is collected in the year the metal plate is issued.

This new law also creates a distinctive Retired National Guard license plate **available to all retired members of the Alabama National Guard who have 20 or more years of service.** The retiree is exempt from the \$23 annual motor vehicle registration fee, but is limited only to one fee-exempt tag. To obtain the tag, the vehicle must be registered in the retiree's name and the retiree must provide one of the following documents to county license plate-issuing officials: (1) military identification card, (2) NGB Form 22, or (3) DD214.

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Act 2000-752, Military Handicap License Plates: Beginning Aug. 1, 2000, handicapped individuals who qualify for any of the military distinctive license plates currently available may now obtain a military handicap license plate. Act 2000-752 creates the new tag category and provides the option for the following military license plates to feature the International Symbol of Access: Medal of Honor, Prisoners of War, Purple Heart, Retired Military (U.S. Armed Forces Retired), National Guard, Combat Wounded, Disabled Veteran, Pearl Harbor, World War II (American Campaign, Asiatic Pacific Campaign, and the European Campaign), Korean War, Battle of the Bulge, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Vietnam, and Atomic (Nuked) Veteran.

Veterans seeking to obtain the military handicap license plate must meet the same qualification requirements as the standard handicap tag. *Application for Handicap Parking Privileges*, MV 32-6-230, must include the physician's certification of the individual's handicap qualification. Registration fees for the new military handicap license plates are the same as those fees for the corresponding military distinctive tags.

Act 2000-577, Widow of Medal of Honor License Plate Recipient: Beginning Aug. 1, 2000, widows of Medal of Honor recipients may be issued the Medal of Honor license plate. The Medal of Honor license plate is a permanent, registration fee-exempt license plate. To obtain the tag, the new law requires that proof substantiating the husband's or former husband's receipt of the Medal of Honor must be provided to the county tag-issuing official. Individuals may obtain this tag even if they have remarried or if the veteran spouse never obtained the Medal of Honor license plate.

Military Tag Law Changes effective Oct. 1, 2000

Several other tag law changes affecting National Guard members will become effective Oct. 1, 2000. These changes include longer registration renewal periods for National Guard tags and the availability of a personalized tag option to all members of the Alabama National Guard.

Act 2000-578 expands the registration period for all National Guard tags to include the month of November. Before, members were allowed only one month, October, in which to renew their registrations.

Beginning Oct. 1, 2000, for the first time, active or retired members of the Alabama National Guard or the Alabama Air National Guard will be offered the option of purchasing a personalized National Guard license plate at an annual cost of \$50 per year. The net proceeds of

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the \$50 annual fee will be distributed to the National Guard Historical Society. The first tag issued to a Guard member will be exempt from the \$23 standard registration fee, but any additional personalized National Guard tags issued to the Guard member will be subject to the standard annual \$23 registration fee, in addition to the \$50 annual personalized tag fee. The personalized license plate design will be similar to the current National Guard tag, except the Minuteman and the F-16 will be excluded to allow space for a seven-digit license plate. The State Military Department recently issued several guidelines to the Alabama Department of Revenue regarding the personalized National Guard tag option. Certain numeric combinations are already reserved by the State Military Department and are not available for issuance. A member requesting a personalized license plate, denoting rank or grade, must provide evidence to the county tag-issuing official that he or she currently holds that rank or held that rank at retirement, according to guidelines set by the State Military Department.

For more information concerning Alabama's distinctive tags, contact the department's Motor Vehicle Division at (334) 242-9000, or log onto the department's Web site at www.ador.state.al.us. Click on Motor Vehicle, Registration information for a visual listing of currently-available distinctive tag categories.