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State of Minnesota  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**EIGHTY-FIFTH  
SESSION**

**HOUSE FILE No. 2966**

February 14, 2008

Authored by Nelson

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Transportation Finance Division

1.1 A bill for an act  
1.2 relating to traffic regulations; allowing certain state hospitals and institutions  
1.3 and county social service agencies to operate vehicles exempt from payment of  
1.4 registration tax and fees; regulating display of vehicle license plates; amending  
1.5 Minnesota Statutes 2006, sections 168.012, subdivision 1; 169.79.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 168.012, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

1.8 Subdivision 1. **Vehicles exempt from tax, fees, or plate display.** (a) The following  
1.9 vehicles are exempt from the provisions of this chapter requiring payment of tax and  
1.10 registration fees, except as provided in subdivision 1c:

1.11 (1) vehicles owned and used solely in the transaction of official business by the  
1.12 federal government, the state, or any political subdivision;

1.13 (2) vehicles owned and used exclusively by educational institutions and used solely  
1.14 in the transportation of pupils to and from those institutions;

1.15 (3) vehicles used solely in driver education programs at nonpublic high schools;

1.16 (4) vehicles owned by nonprofit charities and used exclusively to transport disabled  
1.17 persons for charitable, religious, or educational purposes;

1.18 (5) ambulances owned by ambulance services licensed under section 144E.10, the  
1.19 general appearance of which is unmistakable; and

1.20 (6) vehicles owned by a commercial driving school licensed under section 171.34,  
1.21 or an employee of a commercial driving school licensed under section 171.34, and the  
1.22 vehicle is used exclusively for driver education and training.

1.23 (b) Vehicles owned by the federal government, municipal fire apparatuses including  
1.24 fire-suppression support vehicles, police patrols, and ambulances, the general appearance  
1.25 of which is unmistakable, are not required to register or display number plates.

2.1 (c) Unmarked vehicles used in general police work, liquor investigations, or arson  
2.2 investigations, and passenger automobiles, pickup trucks, and buses owned or operated by  
2.3 the Department of Corrections, must be registered and must display appropriate license  
2.4 number plates, furnished by the registrar at cost. Original and renewal applications for  
2.5 these license plates authorized for use in general police work and for use by the Department  
2.6 of Corrections must be accompanied by a certification signed by the appropriate chief of  
2.7 police if issued to a police vehicle, the appropriate sheriff if issued to a sheriff's vehicle,  
2.8 the commissioner of corrections if issued to a Department of Corrections vehicle, or the  
2.9 appropriate officer in charge if issued to a vehicle of any other law enforcement agency.  
2.10 The certification must be on a form prescribed by the commissioner and state that the  
2.11 vehicle will be used exclusively for a purpose authorized by this section.

2.12 (d) Unmarked vehicles used by the Departments of Revenue and Labor and Industry,  
2.13 fraud unit, in conducting seizures or criminal investigations must be registered and must  
2.14 display passenger vehicle classification license number plates, furnished at cost by the  
2.15 registrar. Original and renewal applications for these passenger vehicle license plates  
2.16 must be accompanied by a certification signed by the commissioner of revenue or the  
2.17 commissioner of labor and industry. The certification must be on a form prescribed by  
2.18 the commissioner and state that the vehicles will be used exclusively for the purposes  
2.19 authorized by this section.

2.20 (e) Unmarked vehicles used by the Division of Disease Prevention and Control of the  
2.21 Department of Health must be registered and must display passenger vehicle classification  
2.22 license number plates. These plates must be furnished at cost by the registrar. Original  
2.23 and renewal applications for these passenger vehicle license plates must be accompanied  
2.24 by a certification signed by the commissioner of health. The certification must be on a  
2.25 form prescribed by the commissioner and state that the vehicles will be used exclusively  
2.26 for the official duties of the Division of Disease Prevention and Control.

2.27 (f) Unmarked vehicles used by staff of the Gambling Control Board in gambling  
2.28 investigations and reviews must be registered and must display passenger vehicle  
2.29 classification license number plates. These plates must be furnished at cost by the  
2.30 registrar. Original and renewal applications for these passenger vehicle license plates must  
2.31 be accompanied by a certification signed by the board chair. The certification must be on a  
2.32 form prescribed by the commissioner and state that the vehicles will be used exclusively  
2.33 for the official duties of the Gambling Control Board.

2.34 (g) Each state hospital and institution for persons who are mentally ill and  
2.35 developmentally disabled may have one vehicle without the required identification on  
2.36 the sides of the vehicle. The vehicle must be registered and must display passenger

3.1 vehicle classification license number plates. These plates must be furnished at cost by the  
 3.2 registrar. Original and renewal applications for these passenger vehicle license plates must  
 3.3 be accompanied by a certification signed by the hospital administrator. The certification  
 3.4 must be on a form prescribed by the commissioner and state that the vehicles will be used  
 3.5 exclusively for the official duties of the state hospital or institution.

3.6 (h) Each county social service agency may have vehicles used for child and  
 3.7 vulnerable adult protective services without the required identification on the sides of the  
 3.8 vehicle. The vehicles must be registered and must display passenger vehicle classification  
 3.9 license number plates. These plates must be furnished at cost by the registrar. Original  
 3.10 and renewal applications for these passenger vehicle license plates must be accompanied  
 3.11 by a certification signed by the agency administrator. The certification must be on a form  
 3.12 prescribed by the commissioner and state that the vehicles will be used exclusively for the  
 3.13 official duties of the social service agency.

3.14 ~~(g) (i) All other motor vehicles must be registered and display tax-exempt number~~  
 3.15 ~~plates, furnished by the registrar at cost, except as provided in subdivision 1c. All vehicles~~  
 3.16 ~~required to display tax-exempt number plates must have the name of the state department~~  
 3.17 ~~or political subdivision, nonpublic high school operating a driver education program, or~~  
 3.18 ~~licensed commercial driving school, or other qualifying organization or entity, plainly~~  
 3.19 ~~displayed on both sides of the vehicle; except that each state hospital and institution for~~  
 3.20 ~~persons who are mentally ill and developmentally disabled may have one vehicle without~~  
 3.21 ~~the required identification on the sides of the vehicle, and county social service agencies~~  
 3.22 ~~may have vehicles used for child and vulnerable adult protective services without the~~  
 3.23 ~~required identification on the sides of the vehicle. This identification must be in a color~~  
 3.24 ~~giving contrast with that of the part of the vehicle on which it is placed and must endure~~  
 3.25 ~~throughout the term of the registration. The identification must not be on a removable~~  
 3.26 ~~plate or placard and must be kept clean and visible at all times; except that a removable~~  
 3.27 ~~plate or placard may be utilized on vehicles leased or loaned to a political subdivision or~~  
 3.28 ~~to a nonpublic high school driver education program.~~

3.29 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 169.79, is amended to read:

3.30 **169.79 VEHICLE REGISTRATION; DISPLAYING LICENSE PLATES.**

3.31 Subdivision 1. **Registration required.** No person shall operate, drive, or park a  
 3.32 motor vehicle on any highway unless the vehicle is registered in accordance with the laws  
 3.33 of this state and has the number plates or permit confirming that valid registration or  
 3.34 operating authority has been obtained, except as provided in sections 168.10 and 168.12,  
 3.35 subdivision 2f, as assigned to it by the commissioner of public safety, conspicuously

4.1 displayed thereon in a manner that the view of any plate or permit is not obstructed. A  
4.2 plate issued under section 168.27 or a permit issued under chapter 168 may be displayed  
4.3 on a vehicle in conjunction with expired registration whether or not it displays the license  
4.4 plate to which the last registration was issued.

4.5 Subd. 2. **Semitrailer.** If the vehicle is a semitrailer, the number plate displayed must  
4.6 be assigned to the registered owner and correlate to the ~~certificate of title~~ documentation  
4.7 on file with the department ~~and shall not display a year indicator.~~

4.8 Subd. 3. **Rear display of single plate.** If the vehicle is a motorcycle, motor scooter,  
4.9 motorized bicycle, motorcycle sidecar, trailer registered at greater than 3,000 pounds  
4.10 gross vehicle weight (GVW), semitrailer, or vehicle displaying a dealer plate, then one  
4.11 license plate must be displayed horizontally with the identifying numbers and letters  
4.12 facing outward from the vehicle and must be mounted in the upright position on the  
4.13 rear of the vehicle.

4.14 Subd. 3a. **Small trailer.** If the vehicle is a trailer with 3,000 pounds or less GVW  
4.15 with lifetime registration, the numbered plate or sticker must be adhered to the side of the  
4.16 trailer frame tongue near the hitch.

4.17 Subd. 4. **Collector's vehicle.** If the vehicle is (1) a collector's vehicle with a pioneer,  
4.18 classic car, collector, or street rod license; (2) a vehicle that meets the requirements  
4.19 of a pioneer, classic, or street rod vehicle except that the vehicle is used for general  
4.20 transportation purposes; or (3) a vehicle that is of model year 1972 or earlier, not registered  
4.21 under section 168.10, subdivision 1c, and is used for general transportation purposes, then  
4.22 one plate must be displayed on the rear of the vehicle, or one plate on the front and one  
4.23 on the rear, at the discretion of the owner.

4.24 Subd. 5. **Truck-tractor, road-tractor, or farm truck.** If the vehicle is a  
4.25 truck-tractor, road-tractor, or farm truck, as defined in section 168.011, subdivision 17, but  
4.26 excluding from that definition semitrailers and trailers, then one plate must be displayed  
4.27 on the front of the vehicle.

4.28 Subd. 6. **Other motor vehicles.** If the motor vehicle is any kind of motor vehicle  
4.29 other than those provided for in subdivisions 2 to 4, one plate must be displayed on the  
4.30 front and one on the rear of the vehicle.

4.31 Subd. 7. **Plate fastened and visible.** All plates must be (1) securely fastened so as  
4.32 to prevent them from swinging, (2) displayed horizontally with the identifying numbers  
4.33 and letters facing outward from the vehicle, and (3) mounted in the upright position. The  
4.34 person driving the motor vehicle shall keep the plate legible and unobstructed and free  
4.35 from grease, dust, or other blurring material so that the lettering is plainly visible at all  
4.36 times. It is unlawful to cover any assigned letters and numbers or the name of the state

5.1 of origin of a license plate with any material whatever, including any clear or colorless  
5.2 material that affects the plate's visibility or reflectivity.

5.3 Subd. 8. **Plate registration stickers.** As viewed facing the plates:

5.4 (a) License plates issued to vehicles registered under section 168.017 must display  
5.5 the month of expiration in the lower left corner ~~as viewed facing the~~ of each plate and the  
5.6 year of expiration in the lower right corner ~~as viewed facing the~~ of each plate.

5.7 (b) License plates issued to vehicles registered under section 168.127 must display  
5.8 either fleet registration validation stickers in the lower right corner ~~as viewed facing the~~  
5.9 ~~plates~~ of each plate or distinctive license plates, issued by the registrar, with "FLEET  
5.10 REG" displayed on the bottom center portion of ~~the~~ each plate.

5.11 (c) License plates issued after July 1, 2008, requiring validation must display the  
5.12 month of expiration in the lower left corner of each plate and the year of expiration in the  
5.13 lower right corner of the plate.

5.14 Subd. 9. **Tax-exempt vehicle marking.** Vehicles displaying tax-exempt plates  
5.15 issued under section 16B.581 or 168.012 must have vehicle markings that comply with  
5.16 section 168.012, subdivision 1.