

Alabama Department of Revenue

News Release

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New Laws Bring Changes in Motor Vehicle Registration Procedures, Jan. 1, 2005

Montgomery—Recent legislation passed during the 2004 Regular Session makes some sweeping changes in Alabama's motor vehicle registration laws, effective Jan. 1, 2005, specifically relating to prorated registration fees and vehicle registration expiration periods, according to the Alabama Department of Revenue (ADOR).

Under current law, a vehicle owner is allowed to prorate the vehicle's registration renewal fees by submitting a non-use affidavit to the county license plate issuing official if the vehicle is out of service at the start of the owner's 12-month registration period. Act 2004-292 eliminates the prorated fee provision for all vehicles except motor homes, farm trucks, and newly-acquired vehicles, effective Jan. 1, 2005.

The ADOR advises commercial and private vehicle owners to pay special attention to the prorated fee provision. Other than the exceptions noted, owners whose vehicles are out of service at the time of their registration renewal month and who wait until after Jan. 1, 2005 to register their vehicles will be charged fees for the full 12-month registration year, plus delinquent penalties and interest. **Act 2004-292 prohibits the proration of registration fees, beginning Jan. 1, 2005.**

Another important change, according to the ADOR, involves the vehicle's registration expiration date. Under current law, an owner's motor vehicle registration expires on the last day of the month before the owner's registration renewal month begins. In effect, the owner's registration expiration date and the owner's registration renewal deadline are not the same dates under current law. The new law, effective Jan. 1, 2005, changes the owner's expiration date to the last day of the owner's renewal month, thus making the two dates—expiration date and renewal deadline date—the same for the owner.

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To accommodate changes made in the registration expiration date, Act 2004-554 changes the owner's registration period to begin the first day of the month following the owner's renewal month. It does not change the owner's renewal month—only the registration year.

“Vehicle owners will continue to renew their license plates as they do now,” explained State Revenue Commissioner Tom Surtees. “Vehicle owners will see no changes in their vehicle's renewal month or in the amount of registration fees paid over their 12-month registration period; they will only note a change in their registration periods as shown on their motor vehicle registration receipts.”

According to the ADOR, these changes bring Alabama's motor vehicle registration expiration and renewal periods more in line with other states and provide for more uniformity among state motor vehicle and law enforcement agencies.

For more information concerning Alabama motor vehicle registration requirements, contact the department's Motor Vehicle Division at (334) 242-9000.