



RESOLUTION 2024-04

NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS RETRO-REFLECTIVE FRONT AND REAR LICENSE PLATES

WHEREAS, law enforcement officers patrol more than 4 million miles of roads in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, motor vehicles are used in more than 75 percent of all crimes¹ committed in the United States and the quick discovery of such vehicles can help solve these crimes; and

WHEREAS, rising homeland security concerns emphasize the need for fast and reliable identification of vehicles by law enforcement officers and citizens alike; and

WHEREAS, traffic enforcement activities, including the proliferation of the use of automated license plate readers, have proved to be invaluable in the detection and apprehension of individuals involved in crimes and terrorist activities; all means of initial identification, including retro-reflective front and rear license plates are essential; and

WHEREAS, retro-reflective front and rear license plates are critical for the quick and accurate identification of motor vehicles even at highway speeds, especially when law enforcement officers meet stolen vehicles on the highway; and

WHEREAS, retro-reflective front and rear license plates serve as a significant safety device, warning motorists of the presence of a vehicle that is disabled or that otherwise lacks sufficient headlights or taillights to be observed at a safe distance and in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, an effort to repeal the requirement for two license plates is sometimes made in response to budgetary concerns, motor vehicle designs, or for other considerations not centered on public safety; if these efforts are successful, they would have a serious and negative effect on the ability of law enforcement officers to effectively identify motor vehicles; and

WHEREAS, it is important to keep license plates legible and to maintain their retro-reflectivity because they are relied upon by law enforcement and citizens alike for public and traffic safety; and

WHEREAS, license plate covers restrict the retro-reflectivity of a license plate, inhibiting the effectiveness of license plate readers and making readability by law enforcement officers more difficult;

¹ Gardner, Thomas and Terry Anderson (2015). Criminal Evidence: Principles and Cases, 9th Edition. Cengage Learning



NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Sheriffs' Association recognizes that the efficient and reliable identification of vehicles is a critical element of national, state and local safety and security and supports the issuance of retro-reflective front and rear license plates with clearly identifiable registration numbers and states of registration, and urges issuance of new plates prior to retro-reflective degradation and as otherwise required to maintain effective vehicle identification;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NSA supports statutory language prohibiting the use of license plate covers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NSA supports the issuance of retro-reflective validation tabs indicating the month and year for use on the license plates of all motor vehicles registered to operate on public highways and roadways; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NSA supports the use of the License Plate Standard for the design and manufacture of license plates published by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA)².

² AAMVA's License Plate Standard, Edition 3. Published October 2023. https://www.aamva.org/getmedia/7ffefe23-e5d7-4e7b-9393-744be0d25be2/License-Plate-Standard-Edition-3_final.pdf