

§ 20-79.2. Transporter plates.

(a) Who Can Get a Plate. – The Division may issue a transporter plate authorizing the limited operation of a motor vehicle in the circumstances listed in this subsection. A person who receives a transporter plate must have proof of financial responsibility that meets the requirements of Article 9A of this Chapter. The person to whom a transporter plate may be issued and the circumstances in which the vehicle bearing the plate may be operated are as follows:

- (1) To a business or a dealer to facilitate the manufacture, construction, rebuilding, or delivery of new or used truck cabs or bodies between manufacturer, dealer, seller, or purchaser. A plate issued pursuant to this subdivision shall not be used to deliver truck cabs or bodies manufactured, constructed, or rebuilt in another state.
- (2) To a financial institution that has a recorded lien on a motor vehicle located in North Carolina to repossess the motor vehicle.
- (3) To a dealer or repair facility to pick up and deliver a motor vehicle that is to be repaired, is to undergo a safety or emissions inspection, or is to otherwise be prepared for sale by a dealer, to road-test the vehicle, if it is repaired or inspected within a 20-mile radius of the place where it is repaired or inspected, and to deliver the vehicle to the dealer. A repair facility may not receive more than two transporter plates for this purpose. A plate issued pursuant to this subdivision shall not be used on a vehicle that is towing or transporting a vehicle authorized to be operated with a transporter plate under this subdivision.
- (4) To a business that has at least 10 registered vehicles to move a motor vehicle that is owned by the business and is a replaced vehicle offered for sale.
- (5) To a dealer or a business that contracts with a dealer and has a business privilege license to take a motor vehicle either to or from a motor vehicle auction where the vehicle will be or was offered for sale. The title to the vehicle, a bill of sale, or written authorization from the dealer or auction must be inside the vehicle when the vehicle is operated with a transporter plate. A plate issued pursuant to this subdivision shall not be used on a vehicle that is towing or transporting a vehicle authorized to be operated with a transporter plate under this subdivision.
- (6) To a business or dealer to road-test a repaired truck whose GVWR is at least 15,000 pounds when the test is performed within a 10-mile radius of the place where the truck was repaired and the truck is owned by a person who has a fleet of at least five trucks whose GVWRs are at least 15,000 pounds and who maintains the place where the truck was repaired.
- (7) To a business or dealer to move a mobile office, a mobile classroom, or a mobile or manufactured home, or to transport a newly manufactured travel trailer, fifth-wheel trailer, or camping trailer between a manufacturer and a dealer. Any transporter plate used under this subdivision may not be used on the power unit.
- (8) To a business to drive a motor vehicle that is registered or titled in this State and is at least 35 years old to and from a parade or another public event and to drive the motor vehicle in that event. A person who owns one of these motor vehicles is considered to be in the business of collecting those vehicles. The total number of plates issued to a person pursuant to this subdivision shall not exceed two.

- (9) To a dealer to drive a motor vehicle that is part of the inventory of a dealer to and from a motor vehicle trade show or exhibition or to, during, and from a parade in which the motor vehicle is used.
- (10) To drive special mobile equipment in any of the following circumstances:
 - a. From the manufacturer of the equipment to a facility of a dealer.
 - b. From one facility of a dealer to another facility of a dealer.
 - c. From a dealer to the person who buys the equipment from the dealer.

(b) How to Get a Plate. – A business or a dealer may obtain a transporter plate by filing an application with the Division and paying the required fee. An application must be on a form provided by the Division and contain the information required by the Division. The fee for a transporter plate is one-half the fee set in G.S. 20-87(5) for a passenger motor vehicle of not more than 15 passengers.

(b1) Number of Plates. – The total number of Dealer-Transporter or dealer plates issued to a dealer may not exceed the total number of plates that can be issued to the dealer under G.S. 20-79(b). Transporter plates issued to a dealer shall bear the words "Dealer-Transporter." This subsection does not apply to a person who is not a dealer.

(b2) Sanctions. – The following sanctions apply when a motor vehicle displaying a "Dealer-Transporter" or "Transporter" license plate is driven in violation of the restrictions on the use of the plate or of the requirement to have proof of financial responsibility:

- (1) The individual driving the motor vehicle is responsible for an infraction and is subject to a penalty of one hundred dollars (\$100.00).
- (2) The dealer or business to whom the plate is issued is subject to a civil penalty imposed by the Division of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) per occurrence.
- (3) The Division may rescind all dealer license plates, dealer transporter plates, or transporter plates issued to the dealer or business whose plate was displayed on the motor vehicle.
- (4) A person who sells, rents, leases, or otherwise provides a transporter plate to another person in exchange for the money or any other thing of value is guilty of a Class I felony. A conviction for a violation of this subdivision is considered a felony involving moral turpitude for purposes of G.S. 20-294.

A penalty imposed under subdivision (1) of this subsection is payable to the county where the infraction occurred, as required by G.S. 14-3.1. A civil penalty imposed under subdivision (2) of this subsection shall be credited to the Highway Fund as nontax revenue. A law enforcement officer having probable cause to believe that a transporter plate is being used in violation of this section may seize the plate.

(c) Form, Duration, and Transfer. – A transporter plate is subject to G.S. 20-63, except for the requirement that the plate display the registration number of a motor vehicle and the requirement that the plate be a "First in Flight" plate, a "First in Freedom" plate, or a "National/State Mottos" plate. A transporter plate shall have a distinguishing symbol identifying the plate as a transporter plate. The symbol may vary depending upon the classification of transporter plate issued. A transporter plate is issued for a period of one year. The Division shall vary the expiration dates of transporter registration renewals so that an approximately equal number expires at the end of each month, quarter, or other period consisting of one or more months. When the Division issues a transporter plate, it may issue a registration that expires at the end of any monthly interval. During the year for which it is issued, a business or dealer may transfer a transporter plate from one vehicle to another as long as the vehicle is driven only for a purpose authorized by subsection (a) of this section. The Division must rescind a transporter plate that is displayed on a motor vehicle driven for a purpose that is not authorized by subsection (a) of this section.

(d) County. – A county may obtain one transporter plate, without paying a fee, by filing an application with the Division on a form to be provided by the Division. A transporter plate issued pursuant to this subsection may only be used to transport motor vehicles as part of a program established by the county to receive donated motor vehicles and make them available to low-income individuals.

If a motor vehicle is operated on the highways of this State using a transporter plate authorized by this section, all of the following requirements shall be met:

- (1) The driver of the vehicle shall have in his or her possession the certificate of title for the motor vehicle, which has been properly reassigned by the previous owner to the county or the affected donor program.
- (2) The vehicle shall be covered by liability insurance that meets the requirements of Article 9A of this Chapter.

The form and duration of the transporter plate shall be as provided in subsection (c) of this section.

(e) Any vehicle being operated on the highways of this State using a transporter plate shall have proof of financial responsibility that meets the requirement of Article 9A of this Chapter. (1961, c. 360, s. 21; 1969, c. 600, s. 1; 1975, c. 222; 1979, c. 473, ss. 1, 2; c. 627, ss. 1-3; 1981, c. 727, ss. 1, 2; 1983, c. 426; 1987, c. 520; 1993, c. 440, s. 4; 1995, c. 50, s. 1; 1997-335, s. 2; 2001-147, s. 1; 2010-132, s. 6; 2014-100, s. 34.28(c); 2018-5, s. 34.27(d); 2024-30, s. 4.)