



Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles History

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| 1894 | The first law governing motor vehicles is passed. This was a preventive measure only as there were no automobiles yet in the state. |
| 1898 | First automobile appears in the state: a one-seat Stanley Steamer purchased for \$900.00 by DR. J.H. Linsley of Burlington. |
| 1899 | The second automobile arrives in the state; a Haynes-Apperson purchased by Charles C. Warren of Waterbury. |
| 1900 | The first law (1894) governing motor vehicles is repealed. |
| 1902 | The first speed limit law is established ...15mph on the open road and 6mph within town. |
| 1903 | The <i>Automobile Club of Vermont</i> is formed at a meeting at the Pavilion Hotel in Montpelier attended by 12 automobile owners. |
| 1904 | First vehicle registration law and law requiring driver licensing passed. Required all vehicles to be registered with the Secretary of State by May 1905. Registration fee of \$2 established. Total of 373 vehicles registered. Charles Warren has first "#1" plate; retains that number for several years afterwards. The Secretary of State's office was located in Morrisville. |
| 1905 | Vermont's first known motor vehicle fatality happened at Pike's Crossing in North Bennington. |
| 1906 | Law passed providing for the issuance by the State of uniform license plates made of enamel. Registration fee changed to be based on horsepower. |
| 1908 | Legislation requiring annual registration passed. Plates dated for the first time. With the election of a new Secretary of State the office was moved to Essex Junction. |
| 1909 | Vermont's first recorded motor vehicle fatality happened on the Middlesex Road in Central Vermont. |
| 1913 | Number of vehicles registered rises to 4,538. Fords are the most popular make. State average is one vehicle for every 78.4 people. |
| 1916 | First major change in license plates as they are now made of pressed steel rather than enamel. The number of vehicle registrations has grown to 16,000 and there are 19,000 licensed drivers. |
| 1917 | The prior Secretary of State was re-elected and the office moved back to Morrisville. |
| 1918 | It was determined that trained personnel to enforce the motor vehicle laws was needed. The late Ara A. Griggs was assigned as a one-man patrol to cover the entire state. |
| 1919 | A new Secretary of State was elected and the office was moved to Montpelier (where it has remained ever since). Two more enforcement officers were assigned to patrol the state. |
| 1921 | The Acts of 1921 gave the Secretary of State the authority to suspend or revoke the driving license of a Vermont resident and to deny the right of a non-resident operator in |

Vermont if s/he failed to comply with Vermont laws. The 1921 Act also provided for the examination (testing) of all new drivers.

1922	Distinctive plate for commercially used vehicles issued for the first time.
1923	Establishment of first tax on gasoline at the rate of one cent per gallon. The number of vehicle registrations has grown to 61,000 and there are 67,000 licensed drivers.
1925	Massive re-write of all motor vehicle laws forms the basis of present day motor vehicle statutes. Creates a Motor Vehicle Bureau within the Secretary of State's office. The Department's enforcement personnel formed the "Vermont Highway Patrol". The first patrol officers used motorcycles which were purchased by the officers themselves. Plate numbers 1-100 are assigned to various state officials for the first time.
1926	First year "VERMONT" appears written out on the license plate. Prior to that "VT" was used.
1927	DMV is established as a separate Department on April 15, 1927. Charles Pierce becomes the first Commissioner of Motor Vehicles. The first Financial Responsibility Insurance Act was passed (possibly the first Act of its kind in the United States).
1928	After Secretary of State suggests denying driving privileges to all of those who are under 18 years of age, compromise is reached whereby those age 16 and 17 may apply for "Junior Operator" licenses, the first of which are issued in January.
1930	Registration law changed to allow for transfers of registration.
1935	Legislature passes the first motor vehicle inspection law. Also passed an Act authorizing prison inmates to manufacture license plates (a practice that continues today). The annual expiration dates for vehicle registrations and driver licenses was changed from December 31 st to April 1 st of each year.
1936	All vehicles manufactured or assembled after January 1 st were required to be equipped with safety glass. Number of licensed operators in the State exceeds 100,000 for the first time.
1937	This was the first year that the officers in the "Vermont Highway Patrol" stopped using their motorcycles and were provided with state-owned vehicles. By this time the Patrol was maintained with a full working force of 37 officers.
1941	The annual expiration date for driver licenses was changed to May 31 st .
1943	Due to the shortage of metal (because of the war effort) the legislature suspended specifications for license plates and, in lieu of new plates, the Department issued small tabs that were affixed to the 1942 plates. These tabs were made from the tin cans in which the prisoners' food came.
1944	The metal shortage eased enough so that new (but smaller) plates were issued again.
1947	The Department of Public Safety was created and the duties of the "Vermont Highway Patrol" were turned over to them. At that time the Department of Motor Vehicles retained 10 former patrol officers to enforce vehicle inspection laws and to administer the testing of new drivers.
1948	First slogan , "Green Mountains", appears on Vermont plates. Registration fee raised to

\$22.

1949	Upon completion of construction of the "new" State Office Building at 120 State Street in Montpelier, the DMV was moved to this building and is still there to this day.
1950	Number of registered cars in Vermont exceeds 100,000.
1957	Law passed to allow for the issuance of special "vanity" license plates.
1960	Beginning March 1 st a Purchase and Use tax is imposed at the rate of 2% of the taxable cost of the vehicle or \$150 ...whichever was smaller.
1963	Learner's Permit created for anyone 15 years or older. Fee \$1.
1970	Legislature passes the first vehicle title law to take effect September 1, 1971.
1972	The DMV implements computerization of many Departmental functions. The computer programs were developed and reside on the State of Vermont's mainframe computer. Since then many computer programs have been added and many have been revised, but the basic framework of the system remains the same.
1977	Began issuance of a bicentennial license plate to commemorate 200 th anniversary of the adoption of Vermont's Constitution.
1982	Diesel Fuel Tax implemented.
1990	Legislation passed creating a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).
1991	Began the <i>Vermont Rider Education Program</i> to provide hands on motorcycle training.
1994	Implemented a document imaging system for the storage and retrieval of registration and driver license documents.
1995	Put a mobile van operation on the road to bring registration and driver license services closer to Vermonters.
1996	Town Clerks began processing registration renewals on behalf of DMV. Twenty-nine (29) Town Clerks participated in the original pilot project. Inmates began answering general information DMV questions over the phone as part of a partnership between DMV and the Department of Corrections.
1997	Issued Vermont's first graphic style license plate. The <i>Conservation plate</i> , featuring a peregrine falcon, helps to raise revenues for <i>Vermont's Non-Game Wildlife Fund</i> and the <i>Watershed Protection Program</i> .
1998	On November 11, 1998 the Department began issuing a Veteran's license plate honoring Vermont's veterans.
2003	In January 2003 began processing registration renewals over the telephone via Interactive Voice Response and over the Internet. This was the first time that the Internet was used for processing Department transactions.
2004	Mandatory photo license requirement for first time applicants took effect July 1, 2004.