

§ 20-79.1. Use of temporary registration plates or markers by purchasers of motor vehicles in lieu of dealers' plates.

(a) The Division may, subject to the limitations and conditions hereinafter set forth, deliver temporary registration plates or markers designed by said Division to a dealer duly registered under the provisions of this Article who applies for at least 25 such plates or markers and who encloses with the application a fee of one dollar (\$1.00) for each plate or marker for which application is made. The application shall be made upon a form prescribed and furnished by the Division. The Division shall provide methods for physical and electronic application submission and payment. Any electronic application submitted to the Division under this subsection may include a method for electronic signature by the dealer. Dealers, subject to the limitations and conditions hereinafter set forth, may issue temporary registration plates or markers to owners of vehicles, provided that owners comply with the pertinent provisions of this section.

(b) Every dealer who has made application for temporary registration plates or markers shall maintain in permanent form a record of all temporary registration plates or markers delivered to him, and shall also maintain in permanent form a record of all temporary registration plates or markers issued by him, and in addition thereto, shall maintain in permanent form a record of any other information pertaining to the receipt or the issuance of temporary registration plates or markers that the Division may require. Each record shall be kept for a period of at least one year from the date of entry of such record. Every dealer shall allow full and free access to such records during regular business hours, to duly authorized representatives of the Division and to peace officers.

(c) Every dealer who issues temporary registration plates or markers shall also issue a temporary registration certificate upon a form furnished by the Division and deliver it with the registration plate or marker to the owner.

(d) A dealer shall:

- (1) Not issue, assign, transfer, or deliver temporary registration plates or markers to anyone other than a bona fide purchaser or owner of a vehicle which he has sold.
- (2) Not issue a temporary registration plate or marker without first obtaining from the purchaser or owner a written application for titling and registration of the vehicle and the applicable fees.
- (3) Within 60 days of the issuance of a temporary registration plate or marker, mail or deliver the application and fees to the Division or deliver the application and fees to a local license agency for processing. Delivery need not be made if the contract for sale has been rescinded by all parties to the contract.
- (4) Not deliver a temporary registration plate to anyone purchasing a vehicle that has an unexpired registration plate that is to be transferred to the purchaser.
- (5) Not lend to anyone, or use on any vehicle that he may own, any temporary registration plates or markers.

A dealer may issue temporary markers, without obtaining the written application for titling and registration or collecting the applicable fees, to nonresidents for the purpose of removing the vehicle from the State.

(e) Every dealer who issues temporary plates or markers shall write clearly and indelibly on the face of the temporary registration plate or marker:

- (1) The dates of issuance and expiration;
- (2) The make, motor number, and serial numbers of the vehicle; and
- (3) Any other information that the Division may require.

It shall be unlawful for any person to issue a temporary registration plate or marker containing any misstatement of fact or to knowingly write any false information on the face of the plate or marker.

(f) If the Division finds that the provisions of this section or the directions of the Division are not being complied with by the dealer, the Division may suspend, after a hearing, the right of a dealer to issue temporary registration plates or markers. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to require a dealer to collect or receive property taxes from any person.

(g) Every person to whom temporary registration plates or markers have been issued shall permanently destroy such temporary registration plates or markers immediately upon receiving the limited registration plates or the annual registration plates from the Division: Provided, that if the limited registration plates or the annual registration plates are not received within 60 days of the issuance of the temporary registration plates or markers, the owner shall, notwithstanding, immediately upon the expiration of such 60-day period, permanently destroy the temporary registration plates or markers.

(h) Temporary registration plates or markers shall expire and become void upon the receipt of the limited registration plates or the annual registration plates from the Division, or upon the rescission of a contract to purchase a motor vehicle, or upon the expiration of 60 days from the date of issuance, depending upon whichever event shall first occur. No refund or credit or fees paid by dealers to the Division for temporary registration plates or markers shall be allowed, except in the event that the Division discontinues the issuance of temporary registration plates or markers or unless the dealer discontinues business. In this event the unissued registration plates or markers with the unissued registration certificates shall be returned to the Division and the dealer may petition for a refund. Upon the expiration of the 60 days from the date of issuance, a second 60-day temporary registration plate or marker may be issued by the dealer upon showing the vehicle has been sold or leased, and that the dealer, having used reasonable diligence, is unable to obtain the vehicle's statement of origin or certificate of title so that the lien may be perfected. For purposes of this subsection, a dealer shall be considered unable to obtain the vehicle's statement of origin or certificate of title if the statement of origin or certificate of title either (i) has not been delivered to the dealer or (ii) was lost or misplaced.

(i) A temporary registration plate or marker may be used on the vehicle for which issued only and may not be transferred, loaned, or assigned to another. In the event a temporary registration plate or marker or temporary registration certificate is lost or stolen, the owner shall permanently destroy the remaining plate or marker or certificate and no operation of the vehicle for which the lost or stolen registration certificate, registration plate or marker has been issued shall be made on the highways until the regular license plate is received and attached thereto.

(j) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall have the power to make such rules and regulations, not inconsistent herewith, as he shall deem necessary for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this section.

(k) The provisions of G.S. 20-63, 20-71, 20-110 and 20-111 shall apply in like manner to temporary registration plates or markers as is applicable to nontemporary plates.

(l) The Division is authorized to enter into agreements to utilize commission contractors under contract with the Division under G.S. 20-63(h) to distribute temporary registration plates to dealers as provided in this section. The Division must provide compensation to commission contractors for distributing temporary registration plates at the transaction rate established for issuing registration documents in G.S. 20-63(h)(1). The Division must provide commission contractors with any forms, equipment, and supplies necessary for distributing temporary registration plates and provide appropriate guidance and supervision of the distribution. If the Division enters into agreements with commission contractors under this subsection, the Division shall make every effort to enter into agreements with commission contractors across all geographic regions of the State in order to make temporary registration plates accessible to all

dealers. (1957, c. 246, s. 1; 1963, c. 552, s. 8; 1975, c. 716, s. 5; 1985, c. 95; c. 263; 1997-327, ss. 1, 2; 2000-182, s. 5; 2007-471, s. 1; 2009-445, s. 25(a); 2010-95, s. 22(d); 2013-414, s. 70(c); 2018-42, ss. 2(e), 4; 2018-145, s. 4; 2019-181, s. 5(d); 2020-77, ss. 2, 4(a); 2024-30, s. 14(a).)