

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE



REPORT  
OF THE  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

for the calendar years  
1955 - 1956

March 1, 1955

To Stanton S. Weed, Director, Motor Vehicle Division

Re: Temporary Number Plates

We have your inquiry concerning the interpretation of Section 37 of Chapter 22 of the Revised Statutes of 1954. You ask if the temporary plates issued under the provisions of this section are in effect temporary registration or authority to use a car for a period not to exceed seven days without having the vehicle registered. Said section reads as follows:

“A manufacturer or dealer, may, upon the sale or exchange of a motor vehicle, attach to such motor vehicle a set of temporary number plates, and the purchaser of such motor vehicle may operate the same for a period not to exceed 7 consecutive days thereafter without payment of a regular fee. Temporary number plates may not be used on loaded trucks without a written permit from the secretary of state.

“A manufacturer or dealer shall, upon attaching a set of temporary number plates to a motor vehicle sold or exchanged by him, mark thereon the date when said license expires and immediately notify the secretary of state of said sale or exchange, giving the name and address of the purchaser, the number of the temporary plate and such further information as the secretary of state may require. The markings required by this paragraph to be placed on temporary number plates shall be made not less than 1 inch in height, with indelible or waterproof ink.

“The secretary of state may issue temporary number plates to bona fide dealers who request them under such rules and regulations as he shall deem necessary; and shall receive for them 50c per pair.”

It is the opinion of this office, upon a reading of this section in conjunction with other sections of Chapter 22, that temporary number plates are a means whereby a vehicle is temporarily registered with the Secretary of State and not a privilege or license to operate a motor vehicle without registration for the 7-day period mentioned above.

Section 13 of Chapter 22 requires that every resident of the State owning a motor vehicle or trailer shall register the same in this State if such vehicle or trailer is to be operated upon or remain upon any way. This section has the effect of prohibiting motor vehicles from being operated unless they are registered.

The last sentence of the first paragraph of Section 18 of Chapter 22 provides that the Secretary may select and issue special number plates for temporary or other special classes of registration.

These sections, combined with Section 37, compel us to the conclusion that a 7-day plate properly issued amounts to temporary registration of the motor vehicle for which the plate was issued. The make-up of the plate and the attached portions which are forwarded to the Secretary of State by the manufacturer or dealer supply him with sufficient information concerning ownership and other necessary data to amount to registration.

FRANK F. HARDING  
Attorney General