



---

---

## WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

---

---

**2003 Wisconsin Act 184**  
[2003 Senate Bill 420]

**Registration Plates for  
National Guard Members;  
Other Remedial Changes**

2003 Acts: [www.legis.state.wi.us/2003/data/acts/](http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2003/data/acts/)

Act Memos: [www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/act\\_memo/act\\_memo.htm](http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/act_memo/act_memo.htm)

2003 Wisconsin Act 184 makes various statutory changes requested by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT).

**SPECIAL DISTINGUISHING REGISTRATION PLATES THAT IDENTIFY THE BEARER AS A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD**

Under **current law**:

- Members of authorized special groups may obtain special distinguishing registration plates for most motor vehicles that are owned or leased by members of these groups. Authorized special groups include active members and veterans of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps. Members of these groups may obtain special distinguishing registration plates for automobiles, light trucks, motor homes, light farm trucks, light dual-purpose motor homes, and light dual-purpose farm trucks.
- An active or retired member of the National Guard may obtain for his or her automobile or light truck special distinguishing registration plates that identify the bearer as a Wisconsin guard member.

**Act 184** allows a member of the National Guard to obtain special distinguishing “Wisconsin guard member” registration plates **(in addition to his or her automobile or light truck) for a motor home, light farm truck, light dual-purpose motor home, or light dual-purpose farm truck.**

---

---

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents.

### **CERTIFICATES OF TITLE TO VEHICLES LAST REGISTERED IN ANOTHER STATE**

Under **current law**, the DOT generally issues and delivers a certificate of title to the owner of a vehicle upon receipt of an application and the fee required for titling the vehicle, but must refuse issuance of a certificate of title if, among other things, DOT has reasonable grounds to believe the person alleged to be the owner of the vehicle is not the owner. If DOT is not satisfied as to the ownership of the vehicle, DOT may withhold issuance of the certificate of title until the applicant presents documents reasonably sufficient to satisfy DOT as to the applicant's ownership of the vehicle or, under specified circumstances, DOT may issue a **distinctive certificate of title**.

With certain exceptions, **prior law** specified that DOT was required to issue a distinctive certificate of title, inscribed with a specified legend, for a vehicle that was last registered in another state if the law of that state does not require secured parties to be identified on the vehicle certificate of title to have a perfected security interest. If DOT did not receive notice within four months of a security interest in the vehicle, DOT was required, upon application and surrender of the distinctive certificate of title, issue a certificate of title in ordinary form.

**Act 184 repeals** these special requirements related to issuance of certificates of title to vehicles last registered in another state. Under the Act, such vehicles would be subject to the same provisions as other vehicles relating to issuance of certificates of title; and DOT would no longer issue distinctive certificates of title for such vehicles.

### **FORM OF NOTICE ON A REPLACEMENT CERTIFICATE OF TITLE**

Under **current law**, if a vehicle certificate of title is lost, stolen, mutilated, or destroyed, or becomes illegible, the vehicle owner must make application to DOT for a replacement certificate of title and furnish relevant information satisfactory to DOT. DOT may then issue a replacement certificate of title. **Prior law** required this replacement certificate to **bear this notice**: "This is a replacement certificate and may be subject to the rights of a person under the original certificate."

**Act 184** allows DOT to determine the precise wording of the notice on a replacement certificate of title.

### **CHECKING APPLICATIONS FOR TITLE WITH STOLEN VEHICLE RECORDS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ)**

Under **prior law**, DOT was required to check an application for a certificate of title against the records of stolen vehicles **in DOJ** before issuing a certificate of title for a vehicle last registered in another jurisdiction or upon receiving an application for a certificate of title showing a transfer of ownership of a vehicle.

**Act 184** eliminates the reference to DOJ, thereby allowing DOT to check the records of stolen vehicles through the most appropriate or cost-efficient database.

**Effective Date:** This Act takes effect on April 22, 2004.

**Prepared by:** Don Salm, Senior Staff Attorney

April 19, 2004