

Considerations for Rhode Island License Plate Graphic Designs

License Plates are an important public safety device to aide motorists, law enforcement and other public safety officials to identify a registered motor vehicle. The primary purpose of a license plate is to help identify the registration numbers and state the vehicle is registered in. Many states use the license plate as a promotional tool to indicate something unique or prideful about their respective state. License plates are read by both the human eye and automated cameras, used by law enforcement, tolling, parking, national border crossings, and for other applications.

The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) has developed standards states should use when creating new license plates. A link to this document is at the bottom of this document.

License plates are 6 inches tall by 12 inches wide with rounded corners with four bolt holes punched through the aluminum to allow the plates to be affixed to a motor vehicle.

All license plate designs will be reviewed by the Rhode Island Division of Motor Vehicles and Rhode Island State Police using AAMVA's License Plate Design Guidelines for legibility and readability purposes.

Some of the key elements to consider include:

- Contrast is necessary among the license alpha-numerics (ABC 123) and any graphic design elements of the plate.
- Lighter backgrounds and darker alpha-numerics are preferred for enhancing this contrast.
- Minimal to no graphics behind the alpha-numerics that would reduce the contrast and over-whelm the alpha-numerics.
- Simple designs are generally more legible, improving the license plate readability.
- Graphics on license plates should not distort or obstruct the alpha-numerics or any other key identifier including the state name and slogan of the state.
- The state name "Rhode Island" must appear at the top of the plate centered between the bolt holes.
- "Ocean State" must appear at the bottom between the bolt holes for Passenger plates and should be kept free of words for the other plate types (i.e., Commercial, Trailer, Motorcycle, etc.).
- License plate validation stickers are affixed to the lower right-hand corner of the plate. This space must be reserved for the sticker.
- A ¼" white border is recommended around the outside edge surrounding the plate. This helps the manufacturing & printing processes cutting each plate correctly when applied to aluminum.
- Roto-gravure printing will be used to print the elected design on the reflective sheeting and thermal transfer printing will be used to print the alpha-numeric unique to the plate.
- The reflective sheeting has a based color of white and is retro-reflective.
- Transparent ink colors will be used in printing the chosen graphic design so the license plate will look the same in both daytime and night-time conditions when under observation using the headlights of a motor vehicle.

Attachments:

- AAMVA's License Plate Standard, Edition 2, 2020 [AAMVA 2020 License Plate Standard Final \(1\).pdf](#)
- License Plate Template of existing Rhode Island "Wave" design [RI License Plate Template.pdf](#)
- 3M's Conventional License Plate Design Guide for Production Requirements June 2019 [Conventional LP Design Guide 6-25-19.pdf](#)
- License Plate Reference Guide 2019 with each US and Canadian jurisdictions general passenger license plates [LP Ref Guide 2019.pdf](#)