

California License Plate Data (1914–1972)–Appendix 1E

.0100 Year of Manufacture (YOM) License Plate Program

Stipulations from the *California Code of Regulations*, Title 13, Article 3.3
§§201.00–205.14

YOM License Plates were originally issued by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). YOM License Plates will be authenticated by DMV personnel and:

- Must be supplied by the vehicle owner.
- May be restored/painted but **cannot** deviate from the original colors or configurations.
- Year stickers **must** be attached to the license plate prior to registration.
- 1963 and newer configurations **must** be assigned to the specific vehicle for which it was intended (**FOR EXAMPLE**, auto to auto, commercial to commercial, trailer to trailer, motorcycle to motorcycle).
- 1963–1969 year model auto vehicles **must** have a black license plate with yellow characters within the alpha-numeric series of AAA000–YYY999.
- 1963–1969 year model commercial vehicles or pickups **must** have a black license plate with yellow characters within the alpha-numeric series of A00000–Z99999.
- 1970–1972 commercial vehicles or pickups **must** have a blue license plate with yellow characters within the alpha-numeric series of 00000A–99999Z.

Other information for the YOM program:

- License plate colors may vary slightly due to age and exposure.
- License plates issued may vary in length and width by up to a 1/8 of an inch (when license plate sizes were standardized) prior to 1956.
- Environmental License Plates (ELP) (personalized license plates) are not valid for YOM registration because they were not issued until 1973.

NOTE: The information contained in the following chart pages was gathered from various resources and may be incomplete. Each YOM License Plate application is reviewed for authenticity and determined acceptable or not, on a case-by-case basis.

The following charts contain information for license plates issued between 1914 and 1972.

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.0105 Automobile License Plates

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
1914	Brick Red	White	No tab or sticker issued	Plates were 16" x 5 1/2"	Porcelain enameled steel (1914 may have been porcelain enameled iron).
1915	Yellow	Black			
1916	White	Blue	Symbols were issued to affix to the license plates as evidence of registration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1916– a bear made of lead. • 1917– a poppy made of tin. • 1918– a mission bell made of lead. • 1919– a star made of tin 	Plates were 13" x 4 1/2"	Porcelain enameled steel.
1917					
1918					
1919					
1920	Black	White	No tab or sticker issued	Plates were 13 7/8" x 4 7/8"	Embossed steel.
1921	Yellow	Black			
1922	White	Blue			
1923	Black	White			
1924	Green	White			
1925	Yellow	Black			
1926	Blue	White			
1927	Maroon	White			
1928	Blue	Yellow			
1929	Black	Orange	No tab or sticker issued	Plates were 14" x 6 1/8"	Embossed steel.
1930	Orange	Black			
1931	Black	Orange			
1932	Orange	Black			
1933	Black	Orange			
1934	Orange	Black			
1935	Black	Orange			
1936	Orange	Black			
1937	Black	Orange			
1938	Lemon Yellow	Black			
1939	Blue	Yellow	"California World's Fair 39" is embossed at the top of the license plate		

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.0105 Automobile License Plates, *continued*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
1940	Mustard Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued	Plates were 13 7/8" x 6 1/8" with rounded corners	Embossed steel or aluminum. NOTE: Due to World War II (WW II) and the Korean conflict efforts, and the need for steel, aluminum temporarily replaced steel as the license plate material.
1941	Black	Mustard Yellow			
1942	Black	Mustard Yellow	A long steel strip was issued to use with the 1941 license plates that was painted yellow with raised or indented black characters. The steel strip for the top of the plate had the number 19 on the left, "CALIFORNIA" in the middle, and the number 42 on the right		
1943			Steel lithographed tab, white background with red letter "V" for use on the upper-right corner of 1941 and 1942 plates		
1944			A paper sticker attached inside the windshield was issued for use with 1941 or 1942 license plates. The sticker was 3" by 2 1/2", contained blue and white scrollwork, the number 1944 split by a golden yellow Great Seal of California, below the seal were red numbers, and below the numbers were the words Department of Motor Vehicles in blue and white		

California License Plate Data (1914–1972)–Appendix 1E

.0105 Automobile License Plates, *continued*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
1945	Black	White	No tab or sticker issued. Only one plate issued and required	Plates were 13 7/8” x 6 1/8” with rounded corners	<p>Embossed steel or aluminum.</p> <p>NOTE: Due to WW II and the Korean conflict efforts and the need for steel, aluminum temporarily replaced steel as the license plate material.</p>
1946			Steel lithographed tab, chrome yellow background, and black number “46” for use with a 1945 plate		
1947	Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued		
1948			Aluminum tab, natural background with a red number “48” for use on the upper-right corner of 1947 plates		
1949			Aluminum tab, natural background with a black number “49” for use on upper-right corner of 1947 plates		
1950			Aluminum tab, natural background with a red number “50” for use on upper-right corner of 1947 plates		
1951	Black	Chrome Yellow	No tab or sticker issued		
1952			Steel tab, chrome yellow background with a black number “52” for use on lower-right corner of rear 1951 plate		
1953			Steel tab, white background with a black number “53” for use on lower-right corner of rear 1951 plate		
1954			Steel tab, red background with a white number “54” for use on lower-right corner of rear 1951 plate		
1955			Steel tab, pearl grey background with a black number “55” for use on lower-right corner of rear 1951 plate		

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.0105 Automobile License Plates, *continued*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>		<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>	
1956	Yellow	Black	No sticker issued		A national standard for auto license plate size of 12” x 6” (except motorcycles) was established in 1956 and continues currently	Embossed steel.	
			<i>Sticker Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>			<i>Placement of Sticker on Plate</i>
1957			Red	Black			1957–1962 year stickers are placed on a 1956 plate to the right of the embossed “California”
1958			Green	White			
1959			White	Black			
1960			Blue-Grey	Silver			
1961			Red	Silver			
1962			White	Green			
1963	Black	Chrome Yellow	No sticker issued		Auto license configuration plate series: AAA000– YYY999	Embossed steel.	
			<i>Sticker Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>			<i>Placement of Sticker on Plate</i>
1964			White	Black			1964–1969 year stickers are placed on the right sticker well of the base plate
1965			Orange	Black			
1966			Yellow	Black			
1967			Blue	Black			
1968			Pink	Black			
1969			White	Black			

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.0110 Commercial License Plates

For commercial license plates, use the automobile license plate chart and the information below to verify license plates issued during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1970s.

The YOM program extends through 1972 for commercial vehicles only because the black commercial license plates supply was not exhausted by the end of 1969. Black and blue license plates were issued to commercial vehicles from 1970-1973. Therefore, blue license plates are included in the YOM program for commercial vehicles from 1970-1972.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Symbols</i>	<i>Comments</i>				
<i>During the 1930s and 1940s Commercial Vehicles Used the Following Symbols:</i>						
1930–1949	BE SC 7890	Solid tires on a commercial vehicle operating on a Board of Equalization (BOE) Permit.				
	BE PC 5432	Pneumatic tires on commercial vehicle operating on a BOE Permit.				
	P C 78901	Commercial vehicle with pneumatic tires.				
	S C 23456	Commercial vehicle with solid tires.				
<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Plate Character Color</i>	<i>Sticker Color</i>	<i>Sticker Character Color</i>	<i>Placement of Sticker on Plate</i>	<i>Plate Data</i>
1970	Blue	Six yellow character	Orange	Black	Year stickers are placed on the right sticker well of plate	Commercial configuration series 00000A-99999Z
1971			Green			
1972			Yellow			

NOTE:

1963 and newer commercial license plates cannot be assigned to a regular automobile. 1962 and older commercial vehicles may be assigned regular automobile YOM license plates; however, all weight fees apply.

Wrecker (WKR) license plates **cannot** be used for tow trucks, or any other vehicle, due to department database constraints.

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.0115 Motorcycle License Plates

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
1914	Red	White	Stacked one letter with two or three numbers. No tab or sticker issued	Plates were 9 1/2" x 2 3/4" (or 10" x 3") concave and shape	Enameled steel.
1915	Yellow	Black			
1916	White	Blue	Symbols were issued to affix to the license plates as evidence of registration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1916– a bear made of lead. • 1917– a poppy made of tin. • 1918– a mission bell made of lead. • 1919– a star made of tin. 		
1917					
1918					
1919					
1920	Black	White	No tab or sticker issued	Plates were 4" x 7 1/2" with three or four numbers	Embossed steel.
1921	Yellow	Black			
1922	White	Blue			
1923	Black	White			
1924	Green	White			
1925	Yellow	Black			
1926	Blue	White			
1927	Maroon/ Red	White			
1928	Blue	Deep Yellow			
1929	Black	Orange			
1930	Yellow/ Orange	Black			
1931	Black	Orange			
1932	Orange	Black			
1933	Black	Orange			
1934	Orange	Black			
1935	Black	Orange		Plates were 4 1/8" x 7 1/4" with rounded corners and four or five numbers	
1936	Orange	Black			
1937	Black	Orange			
1938	Lemon Yellow	Black			
1939	Blue	Yellow			
1940	Mustard Yellow	Black			

California License Plate Data (1914–1972)–Appendix 1E

.0115 Motorcycle License Plate, *continued*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>		<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
1941	Black	Yellow	No tab or sticker issued		Plates were 4 1/8" x 7 1/4" with rounded corners and five numbers	Embossed steel.
1942						
1943	Yellow	Black				
1944						
1945	Black	White				
1946			Metal tab			
1947	Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued			
1948			Metal tabs			
1949						
1950						
1951	Black	Yellow	No tab or sticker issued			
1952			Metal tabs			
1953						
1954						
1955						
<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Sticker Color</i>	<i>Sticker Character Color</i>	<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
1956	Yellow	Black	No sticker issued.		1956 and 1963 plates were 5" x 8" with six numbers	Embossed steel.
1957			Red	Black		
1958			Green	White		
1959			White	Black		
1960			Blue/Gray	Silver		
1961			Red	Silver		
1962			White	Green		
1963	Black	Yellow	No sticker issued.		1963 base plates were 5" x 8" with six numbers	
1964			White	Black		
1965			Orange			
1966			Yellow			
1967			Blue			
1968			Pink			
1969			White			

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.0120 Trailer License Plates

1918 license plates specifically identifying commercial trailers were introduced.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
1914	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1915					
1916					
1917					
1918	White	Blue	“TRAILER” appears at the top of the plate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1918– a mission bell made of lead. • 1919– a red star made of tin. 	Plates were 13” x 4 1/2”	Porcelain enameled steel.
1919					
1920	Black	White	No tab or sticker issued.	Plates were 13 7/8” x 4 7/8”	Embossed steel.
1921	Yellow	Black			
1922	White	Blue			
1923	Black	White			
1924	Green	White	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “TLR” “CAL 24”		
1925	Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “TLR” “CAL 25”		
1926	Blue	White	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “TLR” “CAL 26”		
1927	Maroon/ Red	White	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “TLR” “CAL 27”		
1928	Blue	Yellow	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “TLR” “CAL 28”		
1929	Black	Yellow/ Orange	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “TLR” “CAL 29”	Plates were 14” x 6 1/8”	
1930	Yellow/ Orange	Black	No tab or sticker issued. “PT” followed by five numbers		
1931	Black	Orange			
1932	Orange	Black			
1933	Black	Orange			
1934	Orange	Black			

California License Plate Data (1914–1972)–Appendix 1E

.0120 Trailer License Plates, *continued*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
1935	Black	Orange	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “PT” followed by five or six numbers	Plates were 14” x 6 1/8”	Embossed steel.
1936	Orange	Black			
1937	Black	Orange			
1938	Lemon Yellow	Black			
1939	Blue	Yellow	“California World’s Fair” is embossed at the top of the plate. Stacked “PT” followed by five or six numbers		
1940	Mustard Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “PT” followed by five or six numbers	Plates were 13 7/8” x 6 1/8” with rounded corners	Embossed steel or aluminum. NOTE: Due to WW II and the Korean conflict efforts, and the need for steel, aluminum temporarily replaced steel as the license plate material.
1941	Black	Yellow	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “PT” followed by six numbers		

California License Plate Data (1914–1972)–Appendix 1E

.0120 Trailer License Plates, *continued*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
1942	Black	Yellow	A long steel strip was issued to use with the 1941 license plates; the strip was painted yellow with raised black characters. The steel strip for the top of the plate had the number 19 on the left, “CALIFORNIA” in the middle, and the number “42” on the right. In 1942, for original registrations, new base license plates similar to the 1941 license plates were issued	Plates were 13 7/8” x 6 1/8” with rounded corners	Embossed steel or aluminum. NOTE: Due to WWII and the Korean conflict efforts, and the need for steel, aluminum temporarily replaced steel as the license plate material.
1943		Steel lithographed tab, white background with red letter “V” for use on upper-right corner of 1941 and 1942 plates			
1944		A paper sticker attached inside the windshield was issued for use with 1941 or 1942 license plates. The sticker was 3” by 2 1/2”, contained blue and white scrollwork, the number 1944 split by a golden yellow Great Seal of California, below the seal were red numbers, and below the numbers were the words Department of Motor Vehicles in blue and white			
1945	Black	White	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “PT” followed by five numbers.		
1946			Metal (unknown metal type) lithographed tab, chrome yellow background with black number “46” for use with the 1945 plate		

California License Plate Data (1914–1972)–Appendix 1E

.0120 Trailer License Plates, *continued*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
1947	Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “TLR” followed by six numbers	Plates were 13 7/8” x 6 1/8” with rounded corners	1940–1951 embossed steel or aluminum. NOTE: Due to WW II and the Korean conflict efforts, and the need for steel, aluminum temporarily replaced steel as license plate material.
1948			Aluminum tab, natural background with the red number “48” for use on upper-right corner of license plates		
1949			Aluminum tab, natural background with black number “49” for use on upper-right corner of license plates		
1950	Yellow	Black	Aluminum tab, natural background with red number “50” for use on upper-right corner of license plates		
1951	Black	Yellow	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked “TLR” followed by six numbers		
1952			Steel tab, chrome yellow background with black number “52” for use on lower-right corner of license plates		
1953			Steel tab, white background with black number “53” for use on lower-right corner of license plates		
1954			One steel tab, red background with white number “54” for use on lower-right corner of rear license plate		
1955			One steel tab, pearl grey background with black number “55” for use on lower-right corner of rear license plate		

California License Plate Data (1914–1972)–Appendix 1E

.0120 Trailer License Plates, *continued*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Plate Color</i>	<i>Character Color</i>	<i>Comments</i>		<i>Plate Data</i>	<i>Plate Material</i>
			<i>Sticker Color</i>	<i>Sticker Character Color</i>	A national standard for auto, truck and trailer license plate size of 12” x 6” (except motorcycles) was established in 1956 and continues currently	Embossed steel.
1956	Yellow	Black	No sticker issued			
1957			Red	Black		
1958			Green	White		
1959			White	Black		
1960			Blue-Grey	Silver		
1961			Red	Silver		
1962			White	Green		
1963	Black	Yellow	No sticker issued		1956 and 1963 base plates may have either six numbers or two alpha followed by four numbers. The difference indicates the type of trailer (camper/travel/commercial fee paid, etc.). Configurations outside these guidelines will be determined acceptable or not, on a case by case basis	
1964			White	Black		
1965			Orange			
1966			Yellow			
1967			Blue			
1968			Pink			
1969			White			