

Unregistered Vehicles Statute

39:3-4 Registration of automobiles and motorcycles, application, registration certificates; expiration; issuance; violations; notification.

39:3-4. Except as hereinafter provided, every resident of this State and every nonresident whose automobile or motorcycle shall be driven in this State shall, before using such vehicle on the public highways, register the same, and no automobile or motorcycle shall be driven unless so registered.

Such registration shall be made in the following manner: An application in writing, signed by the applicant or by an agent or officer, in case the applicant is a corporation, shall be made to the chief administrator or the chief administrator's agent, on forms prepared and supplied by the chief administrator, containing the name, street address of the residence or the business of the owner, mailing address, if different from the street address of the owner's residence or business, and age of the owner, together with a description of the character of the automobile or motorcycle, including the name of the maker and the vehicle identification number, or the manufacturer's number or the number assigned by the chief administrator if the vehicle does not have a vehicle identification number, and any other statement that may be required by the chief administrator. A post office box shall appear on the application only as part of a mailing address that is submitted by the owner, agent or officer, as the case may be, in addition to the street address of the applicant's residence or business; provided, however, the chief administrator, upon application, shall permit a person who was a victim of a violation of N.J.S.2C:12-10, N.J.S.2C:14-2, or N.J.S.2C:25-17 et seq., or who the chief administrator otherwise determines to have good cause, to use as a mailing address a post office box, an address other than the applicant's address or other contact point. An owner whose last address appears on the records of the division as a post office box shall change his address on his application for renewal to the street address of his residence or business and, if different from his street address, his mailing address unless the chief administrator has determined, pursuant to this section, that the owner may use a post office box, an address other than the owner's address or other contact point as a mailing address. The application shall contain the name of the insurer of the vehicle and the policy number. If the vehicle is a leased motor vehicle, the application shall make note of that fact and shall include along with the name and street address of the lessor the name, street address and driver license number of the lessee.

Thereupon the chief administrator shall have the power to grant a registration certificate to the owner of any motor vehicle, if over 17 years of age, application for the registration having been properly made and the fee therefor paid, and the vehicle being of a type that complies with the requirements of this title. The form and contents of the registration certificate to be issued shall be determined by the chief administrator.

If the vehicle is a leased motor vehicle, the registration certificate shall, in addition to containing the name and street address of the lessor, identify the vehicle as a leased motor vehicle.

The chief administrator shall maintain a record of all registration certificates issued, and of the contents thereof.

Every registration shall expire and the registration certificate thereof become void on the last day of the twelfth calendar month following the calendar month in which the certificate was issued; provided, however, that the chief administrator may, at his discretion, require

registrations which shall expire, and issue certificates thereof which shall become void, on a date fixed by him, which date shall not be sooner than three months nor later than 26 months after the date of issuance of such certificates, and the fees for such registrations, including any other fees or charges collected in connection with the registration fee, shall be fixed by the chief administrator in amounts proportionately less or greater than the fees established by law. The chief administrator may fix the expiration date for registration certificates at a date other than 12 months if the chief administrator determines that the change is necessary, appropriate or convenient in order to aid in implementing the vehicle inspection requirements of chapter 8 of Title 39 or for other good cause. The chief administrator may, for good cause extend a registration beyond the expiration date that appears upon the registration certificate for periods not to exceed 12 additional months. The chief administrator may extend the expiration date of a registration without payment of a proportionate fee when the chief administrator determines that such extension is necessary for good cause. If any registration is so extended, the owner shall pay upon renewal the full registration fee for the period fixed by the chief administrator as if no extension had been granted.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, every registration for new passenger automobiles shall expire and the registration certificate shall become void on the last day of the 48th calendar month following the calendar month in which the certificate was initially issued. On and after February 1, 2005, the provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to new passenger automobiles purchased by a rental company for use as rental passenger automobiles. As used in this paragraph, "rental company" means a person engaged in the business of renting motor vehicles; and "rental passenger automobile" means a passenger automobile that is rented without a driver and used in the transportation of persons or property other than commercial freight.

If the new passenger automobile being registered is a leased passenger automobile, the registration shall expire in accordance with the term of the lease. If the term of the lease extends beyond one or more 12-month periods by one or more months, the registration period shall be based upon the full year into which one or more of the months extend; provided, however, the registration period for a leased automobile shall not exceed 48-months.

Following the 48-month period of the initial registration of a new passenger automobile, the subsequent registration shall expire, and the registration certificate shall become void, on the last day of the 12th calendar month following the calendar month in which the certificate was next issued.

All motorcycles for which registrations have been issued prior to the effective date of P.L.1989, c.167 and which are scheduled to expire between November 1 and March 31 shall, upon renewal, be issued registrations by the chief administrator which shall expire on a date fixed by him, but in no case shall that expiration date be earlier than April 30 nor later than October 31. The fees for the renewal of the motorcycle registrations authorized under this paragraph shall be fixed by the chief administrator in an amount proportionately less or greater than the fee established by R.S.39:3-21.

Application forms for all renewals of registrations for passenger automobiles shall be sent to the last addresses of owners of motor vehicles and motorcycles, as they appear on the records of the division.

No person owning or having control over any unregistered vehicle shall permit the same to be parked or to stand on a public highway.

Any police officer is authorized to remove any unregistered vehicle from the public highway to a storage space or garage, and the expense involved in such removal and storing of the vehicle shall be borne by the owner of the vehicle, except that the expense shall be borne by the lessee of a leased vehicle.

Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be subject to a fine not exceeding \$100, except that for the misstatement of any fact in the application required to be made to the chief administrator, the person making such statement or omitting the statement that the motor vehicle is to be used as a leased motor vehicle when that is the case shall be subject to the penalties provided in R.S.39:3-37.

The chief administrator may extend the expiration date of a registration certificate without payment of a proportionate fee when the chief administrator determines that such extension is necessary, appropriate or convenient to the implementation of vehicle inspection requirements. If any registration certificate is so extended, the owner shall pay upon renewal the full registration fee for the period fixed by the chief administrator as if no extension had been granted.

The New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall make a reasonable effort to notify any lessor whose name and address is on file with the commission, or any other lessor the commission may determine it is necessary to notify, of the requirements of this amendatory act.

A lessor doing business in this State shall notify in writing the lessee of a motor vehicle registered pursuant to this Title of any change in its policies or procedures affecting the registration of the motor vehicle.