Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0100   **Year of Manufacture (YOM) License Plate program**

California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Article 3.3, §§205.00–205.14

Year of Manufacture (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.
- Must display legible and unaltered characters.
- May be restored/painted but **cannot** deviate from the original colors or configurations.
- Validation year-stickers or tabs corresponding to the model year of the vehicle **must** be attached to the license plate prior to authentication by a DMV employee. .
- 1963 and newer configurations **must** be assigned to the specific vehicle for which it was intended (for example, auto plates to autos, commercial plates to commercial vehicles, trailer plates to trailers, and motorcycle plates to motorcycles).
- 1963–1969 year model automobiles **must** have black license plates with yellow characters within the alpha-numeric series of AAA000–YYY999.
- 1963–1969 year model commercial vehicles or pickups **must** have black license plates with yellow characters within the alpha-numeric series of A00000–Z99999 or 00000A-99999Z.
- 1970–1980 year model commercial vehicles or pickups **must** have blue license plates with yellow characters within the alpha-numeric series of 00000A–99999Z.
- 1975-1980 year model commercial vehicles or pickup trucks **may** also utilize blue license plates with yellow characters within the alpha-numeric series of 1A00001 to 3Z99999.
- 1970-1980 year model automobiles vehicles **must** have blue license plates with yellow characters within the alpha-numeric series of 000AAA-999ZZZ.
- 1980 year model automobiles vehicles autos **may** also utilize blue license plates with yellow characters within the alpha-numeric series of 1AAA000 to 1SZZ999.
- 1970-1980 year model motorcycles **must** have blue license plates with yellow characters within the alpha-numeric series of 0A0000-9Z9999.

Additional information on the YOM program:

- License plate colors may vary slightly due to age and exposure.
- License plates issued prior to 1956, when license plates were standardized, may vary in length and width by up to 1/8 of an inch.
- Environmental License Plates and Special Recognition License Plates are restricted from the YOM program.

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

- Each YOM license plate application is reviewed for authenticity and acceptability which is determined on a case-by-case basis.

The following charts contain information for license plates issued between 1914 and 1980.

.0105 Automobile License Plates

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments	Plate Data	Plate Material
1914	Brick Red	White	No tab or sticker issued.	Plates were 16" x 5 ½"	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: • 1916- a bear made of lead. • 1917- a poppy made of lead. • 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			

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0105 Automobile License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments	Plate Data	Plate Material
1934	Orange	Black	No tab or sticker issued.	Plates were 14" x 6 1/8"	Embossed steel.
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.		
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 the need for steel during WWII and the Korean Conflict, aluminum temporarily replaced steel as the license plate material.
1941	Black	Mustard Yellow			
1942	Black	Mustard Yellow	A long steel strip was issued for 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. In 1942, for original registrations, new base license plates similar to the 1941 license plates were issued.		
1943			A 1941/1942 base plate and a steel lithographed tab, white background with red letter "V" for use on upper right corner of the plates.		

.0105 Automobile License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments	Plate Data	Plate Material
1944	Black	Mustard Yellow	A paper sticker measuring attached inside the windshield was issued for use with 1941 or 1942 license plates. The sticker measured 3" by x 2 1/2", contained blue and white scrollwork, and 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.	Plates were 13 7/8" x 6 1/8" with rounded corners.	Embossed steel or aluminum. Note: Due to the need for steel during WWII and the Korean Conflict, aluminum temporarily replaced steel as the license plate material.
1945	Black	White	No tab or sticker issued. Only one plate issued and required.		
1946			A 1945 base plate and a steel lithographed tab, chrome yellow background with a black number "46" for use on upper right corner of plate.		
1947	Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued.		
1948			A 1947 base plate with an aluminum tab, natural background with a red number "48" for use on the upper right corner of plate.		
1949			A 1947 base plate with an aluminum tab, natural background with a black number "49" for use on upper right corner of plate.		

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0105 Automobile License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments		Plate Data	Plate Material
1950	Yellow	Black	A 1947 base plate with an aluminum tab, natural background with a red number "50" for use on upper-right corner of plate.		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. |
1951	Black	Chrome Yellow	No tab or sticker issued.			
1952			A 1951 base plate with a steel tab, chrome yellow background with a black number "52" for use on lower-right corner of rear plate.			
1953			A 1951 base plate with a steel tab, white background with a black number "53" for use on lower-right corner of rear plate.			
1954			A 1951 base plate with a steel tab, red background with a white number "54" for use on lower-right corner of rear plate.			
1955			A 1951 base plate with steel tab, pearl grey background with a black number "55" for use on lower-right corner of rear plate.			
1956	Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued.

1957-1962 license plates are a 1956 base plate with the corresponding validation year sticker. | | A standard license plate size of 12" x 6" for autos established in 1956. | Embossed steel. |
			Sticker Color	**Character Color**	**Placement of sticker**	
1957			Red	Black	To the right of the embossed "California".	
1958			Green	White		
1959			White	Black		
1960			Blue-Grey	Silver		
1961			Red	Silver		
1962			White	Green		

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0105 Automobile License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments		Placement of Sticker	Plate Material
1963	Black	Yellow	No tab or sticker issued.			
1963	1963-1969 license plates are black background with chrome yellow characters. Configuration series for 1963-1969 auto plates: AAA000-YYY999		1964-1969 license plates are a 1963 base plate with the corresponding validation year sticker.			Embossed steel.
			Sticker Color	*Character Color*		
1964			White	Black	In the right sticker well of the base license plate.	
1965			Orange	Black		
1966			Yellow	Black		
1967			Blue	Black		
1968			Pink	Black		
1969			White	Black		

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0105 Automobile License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Sticker Color	Character Color	Placement of Sticker	Plate Material
1970	1970-1980 license plates are blue background with yellow characters and a corresponding year sticker. A small number of *black and yellow* automobile license plates were issued until 1970 to deplete existing supply. *These are acceptable.* In 1976, conversion to year-round registration introduced the month of expiration sticker. Configuration series for 1970-1980 auto plates: 000AAA–999ZZZ* *See addendum for restricted license plate series. In 1980, seven characters were introduced in regular series license plates. Acceptable auto license plate series for **1980 only**: 1AAA000 to 1SZZ999		Orange	Black	Year stickers are placed in the sticker well to the right of "California". Month stickers are placed in the well to the left of "California".	1970-1972: embossed steel or aluminum. 1973 forward: embossed aluminum only.
1971			Green	Black		
1972			Yellow	Black		
1973			Red	Black		
1974			White	Black		
1975			Light Red	Dark Red		
1976			Light Blue	Dark Blue		
1977			Light Red	Dark Red		
1978			Green	Black		
1979			White	Black		
1980			Orange	Black		

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0110 Commercial License Plates

For commercial license plates, use the automobile license plate chart and the additional information below to verify license plates issued from the 1930s through 1980.

Beginning in 1970, along with blue and yellow license plates, a small number of black and yellow commercial license plates continued to be issued to commercial vehicles until 1973 to deplete the existing supply.

Year	Plate Symbols	Comments
During the 1930s and 1940s, Commercial Vehicles Used the Following Symbols:		
1930-1946	BE SC 7890	Solid tires on a commercial vehicle operating on a Board of Equalization (BOE) Permit.
	BE PC 5432	Pneumatic tires on a commercial vehicle operating on a BOE Permit.
	P C 78901	Commercial vehicle with pneumatic tires.
	S C 23456	Commercial vehicle with solid tires.

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments
1947	Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked COM on left side.
1948-1950			A 1947 base plate with an aluminum tab, natural background with the corresponding year metal tab on upper right corner of plate.
1951	Black	Chrome Yellow	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked COM on left side. Commercial configuration has 1 letter and 5 numbers.
1952-1955			1952-1955 are a 1951 base plate with a steel tab and corresponding year for use on lower-right corner of rear plate.
1956	Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued.
1957-1962			1957-1962 license plates are a 1956 base plate with the corresponding validation year sticker.

.0110 Commercial License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments		Placement of Sticker	Plate Material
1963	1963-1969 license plates are black background with chrome yellow characters. Configuration series for 1963-1969 commercial plates:		No tab or sticker issued. 1964-1969 license plates are a 1963 base plate with the corresponding validation year sticker.			Embossed steel.
			Sticker Color	*Character Color*		
1964	A00000–Z99999 or 00000A-99999Z		White	Black	In the right sticker well of the base license plate.	
1965			Orange	Black		
1966			Yellow	Black		
1967			Blue	Black		
1968			Pink	Black		
1969			White	Black		

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Sticker Color	Character Color	Placement of Sticker	Plate Material
1970	1970-1980 license plates are blue background with yellow characters. A small number of *black and yellow* commercial license plates were issued until 1973 to deplete existing supply. *These are acceptable.* In 1976, conversion to year-round registration introduced the month of expiration sticker. Configuration series for 1970-1974 commercial plates: 00000A-99999Z or A00000-Z99999 1975-1980 **may** also utilize commercial configuration series 1A00000 to 2Z99999. 1974-1975 configurations may overlap.		Orange	Black	In the right sticker well of the license plate.	Embossed aluminum.
1971			Green	Black		
1972			Yellow	Black		
1973			Red	Black		
1974			White	Black		
1975			Red	Dark Red		
1976			Blue	Dark Blue		
1977			Red	Dark Red		
1978			Green	Black		
1979			White	Black		
1980			Orange	Black		

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0115 Motorcycle License Plates

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments	Plate Data	Plate Material
1914	Red	White	Stacked single letter with two or three numbers. No tab or sticker issued.	Plates were 9 1/2" x 2 3/4" or 10" x 3" and concave in shape.	Porcelain enameled steel.
1915	Yellow	Black			
1916	White	Blue	Symbols were issued to affix to the license plates as evidence of registration: • 1916 – a bear made of lead. • 1917 – a poppy made of lead. • 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		Plates were 4 1/8" x 7 1/4" with rounded corners and four or five numbers.	
1930	Yellow/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			
1940	Mustard Yellow	Black			

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0115 Motorcycle License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments	Plate Data	Plate Material
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			A 1945 base plate with a 1946 metal tab.		
1947	Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued.		
1948			1948-1950 license plates are a 1947 base plate with corresponding year metal tab.		
1949					
1950					
1951	Black	Yellow	No tab or sticker issued.		
1952			1952-1955 license plates are a 1951 base plate with corresponding year metal tab.		
1953					
1954					
1955					

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Sticker Color	Character Color	Plate Data	Plate Material
1956	1956-1962 license plates are yellow background with black characters. 1957-1962 license plates are a1956 base plate with corresponding year sticker.		No tab or sticker issued.		1956 and 1963 base plates are 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	1963-1969 license plates are black background with yellow characters. 1964-1969 license plates are a 1963 base plate with corresponding year sticker.		No tab or sticker issued.			
1964			White	Black		
1965			Orange	Black		
1966			Yellow	Black		
1967			Blue	Black		
1968			Pink	Black		
1969			White	Black		

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0115 Motorcycle License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Sticker Color	Character Color	Plate Data	Plate Material
1970	1970-1980 license plates are blue background with yellow characters and corresponding year sticker. A small number of *black and yellow* motorcycle license plates were issued until 1970 to deplete existing supply. *These are acceptable.* Configuration series for 1970-1980 motorcycle plates: 0A0000-9Z9999		Orange	Black	Plates were 5" x 8".	Embossed steel.
1971			Green	Black		
1972			Light Red	Dark Red		
1973			Light Green	Dark Green		
1974			Light Orange	Dark Orange		
1975			Light Purple	Dark Purple		
1976			Light Blue	Dark Blue		
1977			Light Red	Dark Red		
1978			Green	Black		
1979			White	Black		
1980			Orange	Black		Embossed aluminum.

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0120 Trailer License Plates

License plates specifically identifying commercial trailers were introduced in 1918.

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments	Plate Data	Plate Material
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. • 1918 – A mission bell made of lead. • 1919 – A red star made of tin	Plates were 4 1/2" x 13".	Porcelain enameled steel.
1919					
1920	Black	White	No tab or sticker issued.	Plates were 4 x 7/8" x 13 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 6 1/8" x 14".	
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			
1935	Black	Orange	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked "PT" followed by five or six numbers.		
1936	Orange	Black			
1937	Black	Orange			
1938	Lemon Yellow	Black			

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0120 Trailer License Plates, *continued*

Year	*Plate Color*	*Character Color*	*Comments*	*Plate Data*	*Plate Material*
1939	Blue	Yellow	"California World's Fair" is embossed at the top of the plate. Stacked "PT" followed by five or six numbers.	Plates were 6 1/8" x 14".	Embossed steel.
1940	Mustard Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked "PT" followed by five or six numbers.	Plates were 6 1/8" x 13 7/8" with rounded corners.	Embossed steel or aluminum.
1941	Black	Yellow	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked "PT" followed by five six numbers.		Note: Due to WWII and the Korean conflict efforts, and the need for steel, aluminum temporarily replaced steel as license plate material
1942			A long steel strip for the top of the plate was issued to use with the 1941 plates. The strip was painted yellow with raised black characters, the number 19 on the left, "CALIFORNIA" in the middle, and the number "42" on the right. In 1942, new base plates similar to the 1941 plates were issued for original registrations.		
1943			A 1941 or 1942 base license plate and a steel lithographed tab, white background with red letter "V" for use on upper right corner of the plates.		

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0120 Trailer License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments	Plate Data	Plate Material
1944	Black	Yellow	A 1941/1942 base plate and a paper sticker measuring 3" by x 2 1/2", containing blue and white scrollwork, the number 1944, split by a golden yellow Great Seal of California was attached inside the windshield. Below the seal are red numbers and below the numbers are 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			A 1945 base plate with a metal (of unknown type) lithographed tab, chrome yellow background with a black number "46" for use on upper-right side of license plate.		
1947	Yellow	Black	No tab or sticker issued. Stacked "TLR" followed by six numbers.		
1948			A 1947 base plate with an aluminum tab, natural background with a red number "48" for use on upper-right side of license plate.		
1949			A 1947 base plate with an aluminum tab, natural background with a black number "49" for use on upper- right side of license plate.		

.0120 Trailer License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Comments	Plate Data	Plate Material
1950	Yellow	Black	A 1947 base plate with an aluminum tab, natural back-ground with a red number "50" for use on upper-right side of license plate.		
1951			No tab or sticker issued. Stacked "TLR" followed by six numbers.		
1952			A 1951 base plate with a steel tab, chrome yellow background with a black number "52" for use on lower-right corner of plate.		
1953			A 1951 base plate with a steel tab, white background with a black number "53" for use on lower-right corner of license plate.		
1954			A 1951 base plate with a steel tab, red background with a white number "54" for use on lower-right corner of license plate.		
1955			A 1951 base plate with a steel tab, pearl grey background with a black number "55" for use on lower-right corner of license plate.		
1956			No sticker issued. 1957-1962 license plates are a 1956 base plate with the corresponding validation sticker.		

Appendix 1E - California License Plate Data (1914-1980)

.0120 Trailer License Plates, *continued*

Year	Plate Color	Character Color	Sticker Color	Character Color	Plate Data	Plate Material
1957	Yellow	Black	Red	Black		
1958			Green	White		
1959			White	Black		
1960			Blue-Grey	Silver		
1961			Red	Silver		
1962			White	Green		
1963			No sticker issued. 1964-1969 license plates are a 1963 base plate with the corresponding validation sticker.			
1964			White	Black		
1965			Orange	Black		
1966			Yellow	Black		
1967			Blue	Black		
1968			Pink	Black		
1969			White	Black		
1970	1970-1980 license plates are blue background with yellow characters and corresponding year sticker. Configuration series for trailer plates: AA000-ZZ9999 1980 plates may have seven characters: 1AA0000-2ZZ9999		Orange	Black		
1971			Green	Black		
1972			Yellow	Black		
1973			Red	Black		
1974			White	Black		
1975			Red	Dark Red		
1976			Blue	Dark Blue		
1977			Red	Dark Red		
1978			Green	Black		
1979			White	Black		
1980			Orange	Black		