
Wisconsin Legislative Council

ACT MEMO



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2021 Wisconsin Act 154 [2021 Senate Bill 888]

Registration Periods for Certain Motor Vehicles and Reuse of Registration Plates

2021 Wisconsin Act 154 aligns the registration period and the rules related to registration fees for certain automobiles and motor trucks having a registered weight of 8,000 pounds or less (light trucks). The act also modifies the rules related to transferring registration between vehicles.

CHANGES TO THE REGISTRATION PERIOD

Prior law provided that the automobile registration period was for one year after the automobile's initial date of operation. Prior law provided that the light truck registration period was for 12 full calendar months beginning with the month of the light truck's initial date of operation.

2021 Wisconsin Act 154 implements the same monthly series system for the registration of certain automobiles and light trucks, which includes most vehicles 8,000 pounds or less. This system provides that registration begins the first day of the first month and ends the last day of the 12th month. For an original registration, the period also includes the partial month before the 12-month period begins. For a current registration that expires on a date other than the last day of the month, the period includes the partial month before the 12-month period begins. The act also requires municipalities and counties to use the same registration period as the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Act 154 requires DOT to administer the monthly series system of registration so that the registration work is uniformly spread throughout the calendar year. The act also allows DOT to register an automobile or light truck for a registration period other than for 12 consecutive months if the different registration period will equalize workload or avoid unnecessary cost or inconvenience.

CHANGES TO RULES RELATED TO REGISTRATION FEES

Act 154 makes a light truck subject to the same rules that relate to part-year registration fees as an automobile. These rules relate to the fees and credits that are due when transferring registrations or when applying for registration after a period of not maintaining current registration, including instances of registration in another state or by another person, nonoperation, or military service.

CHANGES TO TRANSFERRING REGISTRATION

Act 154 allows the transfer of registration plates between certain vehicles that are the same type and 8,000 pounds or less, regardless of whether the weights are the same. Prior law required the vehicles to be the same gross weight.

Effective date: March 6, 2022

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