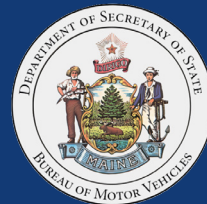


Pine Tree Plate Frequently Asked Questions



1. Do I have to get a new license plate?

If you currently have a standard issue Chickadee license plate, the answer is yes. The Maine State Legislature passed a law in 2023 to replace all Chickadee plates beginning May 1, 2025. The new license plates will be available in the month your registration is due for renewal. (For example, if your car registration expires in February 2026, you'll get new plates with your registration renewal in February 2026.)

2. Why do the license plates need to be replaced?

The reflective material on license plates does not last forever, and plates need to be replaced to ensure readability and safety. Industry standards call for license plates to be replaced every 10 years, but Maine waited 25 years to replace the general-issue Chickadee plate. To ensure that all old plates are replaced, a new design is commonly introduced.

3. How do I get my new license plates?

Beginning May 1, 2025, and over the following 12 months, when you renew your vehicle registration online or at your town office, you will also receive new license plates if you currently have the standard Chickadee plates. You may choose a Pine Tree plate or a Classic (No Tree) plate. If you renew your registration online, your new license plates will be mailed to you.

4. I have a specialty plate, not a Chickadee plate. Do I need to replace it?

No. The law states only the chickadee plates are required for replacement.

5. I reserved my license plate number. When I can expect my plates?

You will receive your reserved Pine Tree or Classic (No Tree) license plates in the mail during the month your registration is due. The high volume of requests for license plates at the start of the new issuance slowed processing, but our offices are catching up. Your plate is on its way!

6. I didn't reserve my Chickadee license plate before May 1, 2025. Can I still reserve it?

Yes! You can reserve your current Chickadee plate number for a \$25 printing set-up fee. The plate will be mailed to you during the month your registration is due for renewal. Reserving your plate number early will help you avoid delays receiving your new plates when it is time to register your vehicle.

*Note: **If your registration has already expired** you must first renew your registration at your local town office before reserving your current Chickadee license plate number. Once you have done this, you can reserve your number by calling our registration section at **207-624-9000 Ext. 52149** or by mailing in a paper form available here: <https://www1.maine.gov/sos/bmv/bmv-forms-and-applications>.

7. How long does it take to get my reserved license plates once I order them?

In most cases, your new reserved license plates will be mailed to you the month your registration is set to expire. The high volume of requests for license plates at the start of the new issuance slowed processing, but our offices are catching up.

8. I reserved my current Chickadee license plate number, but my registration expired. What should I do?

Visit your town office or the Maine BMV website to renew your registration. Your town office will issue 2 sets of stickers to you; 1 to place on your current chickadee plates and the second set to place on your new plates. Your old Chickadee plates will no longer be valid for use on a vehicle once you have received your new plates.

9. The spacing of letters and numbers on my new license plate looks different than it did on the Chickadee plate. Is that okay?

Yes! Some Chickadee plates had letters printed far to one side, which created confusion over whether the letters were part of the license plate number or designated a vehicle class. The new plates are placing the numbers and letters closer to the middle, to eliminate that confusion.

10. I have a 7-digit license plate number or have plates with 7 characters plus a space/dash. I'd like to keep my plate number – what are my options?

For 7-digit plates or vanity plates with seven characters, we recommend choosing the Classic (No Tree) plate. Selecting a Pine Tree plate may cause one number or letter to be printed over the tree image. License plate numbers that include seven characters plus a space or dash may only be printed on the Classic (No Tree) plates. Note: Classic plates are only available for Passenger Class (PC) registrations.

11. I received my new Pine Tree plates and part of the number is printed over the tree image. What are my options?

If the number of characters in your license number caused a letter or number to be printed over the tree graphic, please call our offices: **207-624-9000**. We're happy to discuss your options, which may include switching from a Pine Tree plate to a Classic (No Tree) plate.