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## **Let the Games Begin: Registration Relays**

By Erik Gaspar, Enterprise Fleet Management

For businesses that manage their own fleets, registering vehicles can be a complicated and exasperating process, especially for companies whose drivers are scattered across multiple states and counties.

The excitement begins with different states having different names for their regulatory agencies, which may be known as DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles), BMV (Bureau of Motor Vehicles), MVA (Motor Vehicle Administrators), DOT (Department of Transportation), and many others. The confusion continues with requirements and terminology that vary state-by-state or county-by-county for emissions, license plates, taxes and insurance.

The following examples highlight some of the most common variations:

- Emissions testing may be required by individual states or counties, and criteria may include any combination of model year, vehicle weights and/or mileage. This can be confusing for drivers who may ask, "Where can I get tests done?" or "Do I have to?"
- License plate requirements also can be complicated. Because each county may have its own plates, relocating from one county to another can involve more than just updating an address. A new set of plates may be required. In addition, states can use different terminology and criteria to determine plate type categories such as standard, commercial, combo and truck, to name a few. Because individual states may have special regulations for commercial vehicles regarding where they can park and what roads they can use, having an incorrect plate type can be an inconvenience, costing money and causing headaches for drivers.
- Taxes go beyond the typical sales tax and may also include county, city, excise, tire, ad valorem and personal property taxes. And, although time frames for paying various taxes can range from the time of registration, to monthly or even annually, forgetting to pay one of these taxes can result in penalties, and can hold up registrations until payment has been received.
- Proof of insurance varies from state to state and can delay registrations. Some states require an insurance card with the appropriate VIN displayed, while other states look for an insurance certificate. In some places, electronic insurance submission is mandatory

and in others, the only requirement is the insurance carrier's name and policy number. Occasionally, there is no insurance requirement at all.

The consequences of not keeping vehicles properly registered can be significant, from paying extra charges because of penalties to reducing drivers' productivity if their vehicle is impounded for being improperly registered.

Because there may never be a uniform way to register vehicles across the nation, working with a fleet management company that has the knowledge and expertise to handle vehicle licenses and titles for each state can make the process go much more smoothly for drivers and their companies. In addition to taking full responsibility for the time-consuming, labor-intensive process of renewing vehicle registrations, turning over the responsibility to a fleet management company frees up drivers, relieving them from spending time standing in line at the department of motor vehicles when they could be servicing customers. It also eliminates driver out-of-pocket expenses and the related costs of processing reimbursements.

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Erik Gaspar, Account Executive for Enterprise Fleet Management in Boston, can be reached at 781-937-6363. He is supported by an experienced team of veteran mechanics and accredited Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) technicians to serve the fleet maintenance needs of businesses with mid-size fleets. In addition to maintenance management programs, Enterprise's services include vehicle acquisition, fuel management and insurance programs, as well as vehicle registration, reporting and remarketing. Visit the company's web site at [www.enterprisefleet.com](http://www.enterprisefleet.com) or call toll free 1-877-23-FLEET.