

Antique Vehicle Year Plate Easy Stop For Police

If you have an antique car or motorcycle with the year license plate properly registered, you still may be legally stopped by the police over and over again. This past Memorial Day weekend, I took my 1974 BMW motorcycle out for a ride early on Sunday morning. I was riding on West road in Trenton, traveling at the speed limit, enjoying the bike and the quiet, traffic free morning. I'm always checking my rear view mirrors (funny how you do that after you have been hit from behind) when I see a local police car following close behind. No problem, I was traveling at or below the speed limit, was wearing my government approved $\frac{3}{4}$ helmet, was legal as I could be. What could be the problem? Police lights flash on, OH! This will be interesting! Pull over on a side street, shut off the bike and keep my hands on the bars. What could this Police Official want with little ole me? "Sir, is this motorcycle registered?" "Why of course it's registered. Here is the registration card from the Secretary of State for my 1974 plate." I give him the card and he tells me that when he ran the plate number, nothing came back on his computer. He goes back to the car and runs the plate again. When he returns he says nothing comes back on the plate. He knows the plate is legit because of the card, I know the plate is legit. When I got this plate I had to make a photo copy of it and send it to SOS in Lansing. So he was very cool about the situation. He said that the numbers were only as good as the people at the SOS office are that put the numbers in the system. He said that he knew the plate was real and then we started talking about antique bikes, bla, bla, bla. Stop over, everything's cool, I'm on my way.

So this plate thing started eating at me. What's going on? Could it be a computer problem because of the holiday? I've got to find out what's going on. On Tuesday, after the holiday weekend, I go to my local police department to have them run the plate numbers. I tell the officer at the desk the whole story about the plate number not being on the computer and

ask him to run the numbers again. Have you ever asked a cop to do something unusual?



How they give you that blank stare as they are trying to figure out what kind of scam you are trying to pull on them? That's the stare I got. After a minute of the blank stare he turns to his supervising officer, and tells the story. The supervisor says to run the numbers. The results are the same, nothing on record.

What's going on here? Two different police departments run this plate and nothing comes back as to it being registered? I've got to find out what's going on! The next weekend, I'm at a party hosted by a police officer from the Brownstown police department. I tell him the whole story about the Trenton stop and my inquiry at my local police department. He has no idea why the plate didn't come up. Well this is a challenge, and I love a challenge. I'm going to the source, the Secretary of State office. After waiting in line for the mandatory 45 minutes, I get to have a face to face with an official representative of the Secretary of State. I'm thinking that anytime someone asks a question outside the normal plates, license or registration question, the government blank stare comes into effect, but it didn't happen. I told her my story, and she runs the numbers and says antique plate aren't on the police computers, **they aren't even on the SOS computers!** WTF? I register a plate and it never gets on the computer systems that checks vehicle plates? I have not found out why these plates are not in the system. I have not talked

to Terry Lynn Land, the Secretary of State, to find out the reason for this. But I must deal with the way the system is, and must make other people aware of the way the system is. If you ride or drive a motorcycle or car with an antique year plate, you are open season for any police officer. I talked to four police officers from three different police departments, and none of them knew that an antique year plate was not on their computer systems. A police officer can legally stop you with a 30 year old plate (probable cause) because the plate number doesn't come up on his computer. And this stop can happen over and over, in every city that you travel through. This is something to be prepared for.

I have additional information to add to this article that I have learned since writing it. On the Secretary of State's web site, you can ask questions about SOS issues. I wrote about this

problem of antique plates not being on the system. And to my great surprise, I had a reply from a real human person! Ken S. from the office of communications sent me two e-mails. The first one was a typical link to the SOS site on antique plates. Then the next one was a while later, when he did a little thinking about my questions. He said that antique plates are not on the mainframe system. But the SOS will be working on adding antique plate numbers to the mainframe within the next few months. He said that the present system could not have the same plate numbers as with current year and the old antique numbers. (This makes no sense to me because if you add the plate year to the number, you would never get two numbers the same.) But at least I know that the SOS has recognized the problem and are working on it. But this means that the antique plate vehicle owners are still open season to police stops until this problem is solved.

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I would like to thank the following people for the
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I am greatly honored, thank you!

Wayne Rogalski