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To: All Massachusetts Based Bus Companies Operating Charter Trips Into Other Jurisdictions  
From: MassDOT RMV Division  
Date: April 2016  
RE: Charter Bus and Apportioned Plates

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### **Charter Bus and Apportioned Plates Change**

The International Registration Plan (Plan), commonly called IRP, has been amended to remove the exemption for buses used in the transportation of chartered parties. Previously, registration for chartered buses in the Plan had been optional.

Beginning on January 1, 2016, all charter buses engaging in interstate commerce are required to obtain an apportioned registration or a trip permit.

### **Definitions**

Chartered Party is a group of persons who, pursuant to a common purpose and under a single contract, have acquired the exclusive use of a passenger-carrying motor vehicle to travel together as a group to a specified destination or for a particular itinerary, either agreed upon in advance or modified by the group after leaving the place of origin. This term includes services rendered to a number of passengers that a passenger carrier or its agent has assembled into a travel group through sales of a ticket to each individual passenger from one or more points of origin to a single advertised destination.

Fixed Route Transportation is the transporting of school pupils on a predetermined daily basis to and from a set location for the length of the pupil's school year. This includes:

- Transporting from home-to-school and school-to-home
- Picking up and dropping off at established bus stops
- Transporting from home-to-school-to an after-school activity
- Transporting to an after-school day care
- Transporting from school to school
- A similar type of daily route

International Registration Plan is a registration reciprocity agreement among states of the United States, the District of Columbia, and provinces of Canada providing for payment of apportionable fees on the basis of total distance operated in all jurisdictions.

Interstate Commerce is trade, traffic, or transportation involving the crossing of a state boundary. Either the vehicle, its passengers, or cargo must cross a state boundary, or there must be the intent to cross a state boundary to be considered an interstate carrier.

School Bus in Massachusetts is defined as any motor vehicle used for the transportation of school pupils and school personnel to and from a school, camp, or recreational program. It does NOT INCLUDE any of the following:

- A vehicle used for the common carriage of the public under a certificate and permit issued under MGL c159A s7 & 8 (DPU permit)
- A vehicle having permanent seating accommodations for and carrying not more than eight persons in addition to the driver (Pupil Plate)
- A vehicle, having not more than 14 seats, transporting vocational students to and from a work site

School Pupil is defined as any person enrolled in any of the following:

- Any school: kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- Any program for day care services
- Any program for children with special needs as defined in MGL c71B s 1
- Any organized day or summer camp program
- Any activity supported by said school

## **FAQs**

Q: How does this change impact my company?

A: Beginning on January 1, 2016, in order to engage in interstate commerce, a company must register their charter buses as apportioned vehicles and receive Apportioned Plates, or purchase trip permits for each jurisdiction they intend to travel through.

Q: If I drive a school bus into an adjoining state to pick up students that regularly attend school in my district, do I need Apportioned Plates?

A: NO. If the bus is being operated within the provisions of the “school bus plate” or “bus plate”, IRP and Trip Permits are NOT required.

Q: If my bus company leases school buses to a school district for an event and does not have a contract with the school district (one time school related charter event) do I need Apportioned Plates?

A: NO, however, a Trip Permit is required.

Q: If my contract with the school district includes all activities, including sporting and club events, field trips etc. that are outside, or in addition to the fixed route and may take us out of state, do I need Apportioned Plates?

A: NO. Your School Bus plate is valid in other states within the use of the bus under the contract.

Q: If the bus company uses the school bus for private charter work outside of the school district contract and receives additional payment for trips out of state, do I need Apportioned Plates?

A: YES, if it is on a regular basis, your school bus now needs to have Apportioned Plates, or else you would need a trip permit for each out of state trip.

- Q: If I only go out of state on an occasional basis for a private charter, do I need Apportioned Plates?
- A: No. However, you do need a Trip Permit for each trip out of state.
- Q: When do I need a Trip Permit when using my school bus?
- A: A Trip Permit is required when the “school bus” or “bus” is being used for out of state charter work and is best suited when it is only on an occasional basis.
- Q: Are Apportioned Plates allowed on my School Bus?
- A: YES. The RMV has requested an emergency regulation change to 540 CMR 2.05 (k) to allow a school bus that transports school pupils to have Apportioned Plates. The RMV has reached out to state and local police to notify them that school buses may display Apportioned Plates.
- Q: How can I register my bus with an IRP Apportioned Registration?
- A: To obtain a Massachusetts IRP registration, you must have an established place of business in Massachusetts. You are required to submit a completed IRP application, an Application for Registration and Title (RMV-1) with insurance certification, and the Certificate of Origin or Title for each vehicle. There are IRP locations in Quincy, Milford, Springfield, and Lawrence. Applications and forms and IRP office addresses can be found on the RMV website at [www.massrmv.com](http://www.massrmv.com).
- Q: I already renewed/registered my bus; will I receive any credit on the Massachusetts fees?
- A: It depends on the individual circumstance. A full refund of the registration fee will be issued if the registration is canceled within ten days of the registration effective date. A partial refund for ½ of the registration fee amount (in excess of \$15) will be issued if the registration is canceled prior to the first day of the seventh month following the effective date appearing on the Certificate of Registration. The Rebate/Refund Application can be found at the RMV website at [www.massrmv.com](http://www.massrmv.com).
- Q: How much does an IRP registration cost?
- A: IRP registration fees cannot be determined until the application has been processed. The registration fees are dependent on the percentage of miles traveled in each IRP jurisdiction, the registered combined gross vehicle weight, and all other jurisdiction's registration fees. Therefore, a registration invoice is not available until after the account and vehicle information is entered into the IRP system.

Q: How do I obtain a trip permit?

A: Massachusetts trip permits are issued in lieu of a valid IRP apportioned cab card and are available for a fee of \$15.00 for a 72-hour period. Trip permits can be purchased by contacting a transceiver. The following entities issue permits to Massachusetts registrants:

aZip Permit, LLC	800-937-6329
ComData Network, Inc	800-833-8640
Custom Permit Service Co	800-669-5014
Elec Fund Source LLC/ T-Check Systems	866-351-2435
Fleet One, LLC	877-251-7639
Highway Permits Company, LLC	888-731-0312
Jet Permit, LTD	800-788-0603
JJ Keller & Associates	920-722-2848
National Permits Inc dba State Permits	800-331-4805
Nova Permits and Pilot Cars	800-567-7775
Permit America Inc	866-573-7648
Promiles Software Development Corp	409-697-2587 ext 254
RF Mollin dba The Permit Company	877-274-8070
Rite-Way Transportation Services LLC	866-606-6148
Trans/Mid America	800-228-7577
West Chester Permit LLC	800-734-3544