

Motorcycles, Registered License Number of. License Number for Motorcycles, May Be Placed Where.

It is a sufficient compliance with the requirements of the statute if the license number of any motor vehicle be painted upon said vehicle in black, upon a white background.

May 21st, 1913.

Hon. A. M. Alderson,
Secretary of State,
Helena, Montana.

Dear Sir:

Under date of May 13th, 1913, Mr. R. T. Carpenter of Glendive, Montana, addressed a letter to your office from which the following excerpt is quoted:

"Will it not be sufficient for we motor-cycle men to paint on our rear mud-guards the number that you give us. It is very awkward for us to make an arrangement that will be sufficiently strong to withstand the excessive road jars that come while riding a motor-cycle. It would seem to me that just so we had a registered license number on a conspicuous place on the mud-guard, painted there, that we would come within the bounds of the law. Kindly advise me as to that, and oblige."

Your department having referred the above letter to this office, with request that an opinion be given respecting the requirements

of the law regarding the display of license numbers by owners or operators of motor-cycles, you are advised as follows:

Chapter 73 of the Laws of the Thirteenth Session of the Legislative Assembly provides for the registration of all motor vehicles, operated or driven upon the public roads or highways of this state, and also provides for the licensing of every owner thereof. The act provides that upon application for registration being made in due form, the secretary of state shall assign to such motor vehicle, as described in such application, a distinctive number. Sec. 3 of the act, which bears directly upon the question at issue, reads as follows:

“That every motor vehicle, registered in accordance with the provisions of this act, shall have the distinctive number and registration mark assigned to it by the secretary of state, as hereinbefore provided, displayed on the front and rear of such motor vehicle, as an identification mark, securely fastened, so as not to swing, and it is further provided that such distinctive number as an identification mark shall consist of a white placard, as the background upon the face of which shall appear the distinctive number assigned to such motor vehicle, as hereinbefore provided, in black, Arabic numerals, such numerals to be not less than three inches long, nor each stroke less than one-half inch in width, such number to be followed on the placard by the initial or abbreviation of the name of this state in black letters, each stroke to be at least one-half inch in width.”

In our opinion the word “placard” as used in the section quoted means a sign to be displayed openly for the information of the public, and that the requirements of the statute are fully met if the sign have a white background and upon its face the number assigned to the motor vehicle in black Arabic numerals of size not less than the section requires, followed by the initial or abbreviation of the name of this state in black letters, also not less in size than the statute requires.

We think it immaterial whether the placard or sign be distinct from the vehicle and attached thereto, or whether it be inscribed upon the vehicle itself.

We, therefore, conclude that it will be a sufficient requirement of the statute if the license number of any motor vehicle be painted upon such vehicle, in black upon a white background.

Very truly yours,

D. M. KELLY,
Attorney General.