



## A Brief History of Motor Vehicles in Texas

### 1899

- First automobile in Texas

### 1907

- First vehicle registered in the state is done by a county official. That vehicle was a motorbus in Snyder, Tx.

### 1917

- House Bill 2 in the 35<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature creates the Texas Highway Department (today the Texas Department of Transportation) and its job is to register vehicles and use the funds to build roads.
- The highway department begins registering Texas vehicles on July 1, 1917. By the end of the year, it registers 194,720 motor vehicles.
- The first official Texas license plates are manufactured in St. Louis. It took 20 railroad cars to bring 300,000 of the sheet-iron plates to Austin.

### 1918

- In a special session of the 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature, House Bill 63 is passed and designates the state's county tax-assessor collectors as agents for registering motor vehicles for the highway department.

### 1933

- Texas Legislature requires the highway department to contract with the state prison system to manufacture license plates.

### 1935

- The first state-manufactured license plates are issued. Texas ranks sixth in the nation for the total number of vehicle registrations.

### 1971

- The Texas Motor Vehicle Commission is created to ensure a sound system of distributing and selling motor vehicles through licensing and regulating manufacturers, distributors, converters, and dealers of those vehicles; enforce manufacturer warranties; and prevent fraud.

### 1977

- The highway department is on the cusp of changing its more than half-century policy of requiring everyone to register between February 1 and March 31. "The deputies had to protect us during the week of March 31 when all registrations were due," a tax assessor-collector recalled. "There were fist fights, even heart attacks, while folks waited in those long lines."

### 1978

- Highway department introduces staggered registrations, much to the relief of citizens and tax assessor-collectors.

**1985**

- Texas Motor Vehicle Commission begins enforcing the state Lemon Law. The law was enacted two years earlier by the Texas Legislature to assist citizens who purchased defective vehicles. The law was challenged in court but failed.

**1991**

- The Texas Legislature combines the highway department, the Texas Department of Aviation and the Texas Motor Vehicle Commission to create the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).
- The 72<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature establishes the Texas Automobile Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) that will award grants law enforcement agencies statewide to deter vehicle theft. The effort will be funded by a \$1 annual fee on every auto insurance policy.

**1992**

- The Texas Motor Vehicle Commission becomes the Texas Motor Vehicle Board. A new law places the board in TxDOT, which creates the Motor Vehicle Division.

**1995**

- The Texas Legislature moves regulatory authority of motor carriers from the Texas Railroad Commission to TxDOT, which creates the Motor Carrier Division.

**2000**

- Lubbock County becomes the first in the state to offer online registration renewals.

**2004**

- The state begins issuing customized windshield stickers for registration. Each sticker is printed with information that identifies it as belonging only to the vehicle for which it is issued.

**2005**

- The Texas Legislature dissolves the Motor Vehicle Board, and moves its authority to the Texas Transportation Commission.

**2007**

- The 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature amends the Auto Theft and Prevention Authority's mission to include vehicle burglary and changes the office's name to Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA). The office is to assess automobile burglary and theft in the state, including the economic impact of theft.

**2008**

- For the first time in the state's history, Texans choose a new general-issue license plate by voting over the Internet.

**2009**

- There are more than 21 million vehicles registered in Texas. The state is second in the nation in the number of registered motor vehicles, preceded only by California.
- The 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature passes House Bill 3097 that combines services from TxDOT's divisions of Vehicle Titles and Registration, Motor Vehicle and Motor Carrier and the office of Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention into a new state agency, the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV).
- TxDMV begins operations on November 2, 2009 as a new state agency.