



1940

1,707,500 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

For the first time, Illinois' elected Constitutional officers are issued their own designated license plates.



The state creates in-transit license plates that replace the use of paper in-transit permits, which had been used since 1930. The plates are for vehicles used for transporting vehicles from one place to another, usually from a factory to a vehicle dealership. The plates cost \$20 a year, with a \$3 fee for each set of duplicate plates.

National Colortype Co. of Bellevue, Kentucky makes the plates. The company also makes plates for Delaware with the same style of characters.

The Illinois Truck Act takes effect, which require trucks to undergo annual safety inspections. The owners must show proof of financial responsibility (liability insurance).

1941

1,825,100 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.



For the first time, the state issues official plates for members of the General Assembly. These plates replace the bronze-star attachments that have been in use since 1932.

Taxi license plates are issued for the first time. The plates have six digits with the first digit always being a zero. Plates for livery vehicles are similar, having only five digits.

National Colortype Co. of Bellevue, Kentucky makes the plates. The company also makes plates for Delaware with the same style of characters.

1942



1,748,300 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office, a decrease of 77,000 registrations from 1941. The decrease is attributed to World War II.

Hemp and Co. of Macomb, Illinois is contracted to make the license plates.

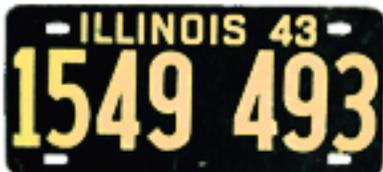
Motor bus plates, for buses equipped with hydraulic shock absorbers and balloon tires, begin to be issued. They have BUS printed vertically as a prefix.

1943

1,592,900 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office, a decrease of 156,000 registrations from 1942. The decrease is attributed to World War II.

By the end of the year, 49 employees of the Secretary of State's Automobile Department are serving in the military.

Due to the rationing of steel during WWII, license plates are made out of fiberboard. In preliminary tests, fiberboard proves breakable and weak, but by adding more wood fiber to the material, a more suitable plate is produced. Fiberboard plates are issued from 1943 to 1948.



As originally written, the contract provides for a decal with the state seal and the signature of Secretary of State Edward J. Hughes to appear on the back plate. Front plates have guide bars for the decal's proper placement. Plates in the 100 000 to 165 000 block have these features.

Greenduck Co. of Chicago is unable to complete the contract because of a fire in its plant. A new contract is awarded to American Decalcomania of Chicago, which had worked as a consultant in the development of the fiberboard material. The provision for a rear plate decal is eliminated. The company makes plates for Illinois for the duration of the fiberboard era.

American Decalcomania also makes fibreboard plates for most other states that issue them. Surplus 1943 Illinois license plates are sold back to the company, which remakes them into 1944 Montana plates. Spoiled and surplus plates from other states are also recycled into Illinois plates.

1944



1,518,600 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The word "FARM" appears for the first time horizontally across the top of plates for agricultural vehicles.

1945



1,508,200 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The state issues windshield stickers at no charge to servicemen, allowing them to use their vehicles without license plates while they are home on leave.

1946



1,614,500 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The words "FRONT" and "REAR" are placed on truck, bus, dealer, farm and taxi license plates. Other states had done this in the 1920s and 1930s to discourage people from splitting a pair of plates between two different vehicles. It is assumed that Illinois did so for the same reason, but why second-division vehicles were singled out for this practice remains a mystery. This practice continues through 1958.

As heavier trucks begin to travel Illinois highways, three new weight classes are introduced. They use the letters K, L, and N.

Semi-trailer license plates appear for the first time and are the reverse color of passenger license plates. The 1946 version of semi-trailer plates also has SEMI-TR on the left side.

1947



1,752,000 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

Nearly all plates are made of fiberboard. Only dealer plates are made of steel this year.

The word "TRUCK" appears on all truck plates for the last time.

1948

1,905,000 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.



The Illinois Legislature creates a plate for disabled armed services veterans, on which the words "DISABLED VETERAN" are silk-screened across the top of regular license plates in the 1.8 million block. Robert Dinsmore, a veteran from Peoria, is awarded the first set of disabled veteran plates.

Manufacturer plates appear for the first time. Plates with the number 1 are issued to the Tucker Motor Co. of Chicago.

A metal identification tag (not a plate), issued annually, is made available upon request to any member of the Illinois National Guard or Naval Militia. The tag costs \$1 and eventually takes the shape of a half moon.

This is the last year that Illinois passenger license plates are made from fiberboard. Most non-passenger plates are made from steel this year.

1949

2,078,700 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office, marking the first time passenger car plate production exceeds 2 million.



For the first time in six years, passenger plates are made of steel. Full production of the plates resumes at Hemp and Company of Macomb, which would receive contracts to make the plates through 1969.

The Secretary of State issues special "Horseless Carriage" plates in conjunction with the Illinois State Fair antique car parade.

Disabled Veteran plates are numbered beginning with V 1200. They are red and blue on a white background and continue to be used today.