

Concerning Amateur Radio Call sign License Plates

Presently, amateur call plates must be purchased separately and annually as are vanity license plates.

The amateur radio community in almost every state is allowed to display license plates on their vehicle showing their call sign. An amateur radio call sign is unique to that individual in that no one else anywhere in the world will have that call sign. South Dakota currently allows this type of license plate. However, as an amateur radio operator, we are required to purchase the same license plate everyone else does. But if we want to display call plates we are required to pay an additional ten dollars annually to do so.

This type of plate is currently classed as a vanity plate. Many in the amateur community feel we should be exempt from the additional annual fee for the following reasons:

- A. Community service is a large part of most amateur's activities.
- B. We cannot charge for any of the services we provide.
- C. Some of those services include, and are not limited to: communication assistance for the Red Cross, for road races, bicycles races, communication for the Salvation Army, and in many communities we are the weather spotters for county emergency management directors we assist search and rescue teams with communications, we have the ability to replace damaged local state and federal communication links and inoperable infrastructure systems. Amateur radio has assisted, and in some cases, carried all communications in times of state and local disasters. Amateur radio operators have assisted during times of FOREST FIRES, TORNADOS, FLOODS, HURRICANES, and more.
- D. Amateurs supply all of their own equipment, radios, antennas, generators, batteries, and support equipment including food, fuel, accommodations and transportation.
- E. Amateur radio operators have volunteered their time from a few minutes, to as much as thirty days or more in times of disasters.
- F. Many have not only provided communications, but are also trained and are proficient in crowd and traffic control, search and rescue first aid, some are certified EMT's.
- G. The state of South Dakota has a "State Link" designed, built, and maintained only by amateur personal and funded with donations from fellow 'Ham' radio operators. It made up of a system often VHF and UHF equipped repeaters covering both the core areas of interstate 90, and interstate 29. Each repeater has a 40-50 mile range and in some cases further. It allows communication from low power radio to cover much of the state. This system has gone from primitive to some state of the art equipment, including solar power, and weather stations on site. More information can be found at: <http://www.wOsd.com/sdarc/sdarc.Htm>

- H. There are about 20 amateur radio clubs or associations in South Dakota, and approximately 850 hams residing in South Dakota.
- I. One of the sheriffs in SD stated in an inter-organization de-briefing, that vehicle marking was an issue when arriving on the scene of the exercise. This will address that problem. Fire departments have used decals for years, but quite often the decal gets left on the vehicle when sold, so that didn't work very well.
- J. During the 9/11 terrorist incident in New York, amateur radio was the only reliable communication system for many days. Most city and county systems were wiped out.
- K. The hurricane Katrina incident covered several parishes, and the Director of FEMA had a large message posted in the command center stating: , "THE AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS ARE OUR ONLY COMMUNICATION. IF THEY NEED ANYTHING GIVE IT TO THEM!" The hams sustained several weeks of communication for all served agencies. And under federal law ham operators **cannot charge for** or receive profit for any communication services.
- L. If we SD hams were to volunteer or be called to a different state, we will again be easily recognized as a valid amateur radio operator, and that we are from South Dakota.
- M. Many hams have taken courses on the incident command system, and are ARES (Radio Amateur Emergency services) members.
- N. We also provide communications for the Red Cross, Salvation Army, community events. We participate in Scouting Jamboree on the Air and other community activities.

I really feel this will be beneficial to all hams that desire a SD call plate, and to the State of South Dakota.

Below was received recently from the American Radio Relay league concerning federal

legislation:

ARLB037 Amateur Radio Bill Passes Senate, Moves to the House

On Monday, December 14, S 1755 — The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2009 — passed the Senate by unanimous consent; the bill now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration. Sponsored by Senator Joe Lieberman (ID-CT), and Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), S 1755, if passed, would direct the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to undertake a study on emergency communications.

S 1755 points out that "There is a strong Federal interest in the effective performance of Amateur Radio Service stations, and that performance must be given — (A) support at all levels of

government; and (B) protection against unreasonable regulation and impediments to the provision of the valuable communications provided by such stations."

Members of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee considered S 1755 on December 10. After it passed through Committee, it was placed on the Senate's calendar to be voted on.

"We are grateful to Committee Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins for sponsoring the bill and arranging for its swift consideration and passage by the Senate," said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ.

Similar in language to HR 2160 (also called The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2009 that was introduced this past April by Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee [D-TX-18]), S 1755 calls on DHS to undertake a study on the uses and capabilities of Amateur Radio Service communications in emergencies and disaster relief and then to submit a report to Congress no more than 180 days after the bill becomes law. The study shall:

Include a review of the importance of Amateur Radio emergency communications in furtherance of homeland security missions relating to disasters, severe weather and other threats to lives and property in the United States, as well as recommendations for enhancements in the voluntary deployment of Amateur Radio licensees in disaster and emergency communications and disaster relief efforts and improved integration of Amateur Radio operators in planning and furtherance of the Department of Homeland Security initiatives.

Identify impediments to enhanced Amateur Radio Service communications, such as the effects of unreasonable or unnecessary private land use regulations on residential antenna installations; and make recommendations regarding such impediments for consideration by other federal departments, agencies and Congress.

In conducting the study, S 1755 directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to "utilize the expertise of stakeholder entities and organizations, including the Amateur Radio, emergency response and disaster communications communities."

S 1755 makes note of the fact that Section 1 of the Joint Resolution entitled Joint Resolution to Recognize the Achievements of Radio Amateurs, and To Establish Support for Such Amateurs as National Policy -- approved October 22, 1994 (Public Law 103-408) - included a finding that stated: "**Reasonable accommodation should be made for the effective operation of Amateur Radio from residences, private**

vehicles and public areas, and the regulation at all levels of government should facilitate and encourage amateur radio operations as a public benefit."

The bill also pointed out that Section 1805(c) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 757(c)) directs the Regional Emergency Communications Coordinating Working Group of the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate their activities with ham and Amateur Radio operators among the 11 other emergency organizations, such as ambulance services, law enforcement and others.