
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission

Vehicle Inspections: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Vehicle Markings

Q. What markings must appear on my vehicles?

- A. The carrier's legal name and/or trade name must appear on each vehicle, as well as the WMATC number that was assigned to the carrier.

Q. How do I know whether to display a legal name or trade name?

- A. If a carrier has a WMATC-approved trade name, it may choose to display either its legal name or its trade name. If a carrier does not have a trade name, it must display its legal name.

Q. What if I don't know the carrier's legal name or WMATC number?

- A. When WMATC approves an application, it mails a copy of the approval order to the carrier's representative. The carrier's WMATC certificate number, legal name (and trade name, if one was approved) appears near the end of this order.

Q. Where should the markings be placed?

- A. Markings must be displayed on both the passenger and driver's side of each vehicle. Most carriers place their WMATC number on the front door, behind the rear tire, or on the front fender of their vehicle. Carriers can select the spot on their vehicle where they place their legal name (or trade name), but it must appear somewhere on both the passenger and driver's side.

Q. How large must the vehicle markings be?

- A. Each individual letter and number of the required vehicle markings must: 1) contrast sharply with the background paint, 2) measure at least 2½" in height, and 3) be permanent.

Q. Can my vehicle markings be displayed on removable magnetic signs?

- A. No. Removable magnetic signs are not allowed, except in rare circumstances involving vehicles in temporary use that have been previously reported to the Commission.

Q. Could I see an example of vehicle markings that comply with Commission Regulation No. 61?

- A. ROYAL TRANSPORTATION, INC.
WMATC 2234

If a name other than the carrier's legal name or WMATC-approved trade name appears on the vehicle, the markings must clearly identify the carrier that operates the vehicle. For example:

AJAX HOTEL
OPERATED BY NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION, LLC
WMATC 2359

Q. Can I obtain a waiver from the vehicle marking requirements?

- A. Carriers may request a waiver of the Regulation 61 vehicle marking requirements for specific vehicles. Waivers are frequently granted for sedans and limousines. Waivers for buses, vans, or minibuses are rarely granted. You must apply for the waiver prior to the vehicle inspection. To apply for a waiver, fill out and submit the WMATC vehicle marking waiver request form.

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Vehicle Registration and Inspections

Q. Who must the vehicle be registered to?

- A. Each vehicle should be registered in the name of the carrier, as it will appear on the Certificate of Authority. If a vehicle is registered to someone other than the carrier, you must file a copy of a vehicle lease before the vehicle is presented for inspection. The Commission accepts most third-party leases, or you can download the Commission's approved vehicle lease form from the WMATC website.

Q. Are non-commercial license plates acceptable?

- A. No. Each vehicle must be registered "for-hire" in the name of the applicant (or lessor). In the District of Columbia, this generally means you must have B-tags. In Maryland, you must generally have P-tags or B-tags. In Virginia, you must generally have H-tags.

Q. What if applicant's vehicle is not registered "for-hire?"

- A. You must first re-register the vehicle "for-hire" in the name of applicant (or the lessor) and submit a copy of the new registration card to the Commission before scheduling your vehicle inspection.

Q. How do I show that my vehicle complies with applicable safety inspection requirements?

- A. Each vehicle registered in Virginia or the District of Columbia must display a current, valid safety inspection sticker on its windshield from an authorized local inspection station. If the vehicle is registered in Maryland, you must keep a copy of the vehicle inspection certificate you received from the local inspection station in your vehicle. The inspection must have occurred within the previous 365 days.

Q. How do I present my vehicle for WMATC inspection?

- A. Once you have filed a vehicle list, registration card(s), and proof of current safety inspection for each vehicle, call (301) 588-5260 to schedule an inspection time. Inspections must usually be scheduled about one week in advance. The Commission will not conduct vehicle inspections without an appointment. Vehicle inspections are conducted near the awning in front of the WMATC office building, located at 8701 Georgia Avenue, Suite 808, Silver Spring, Maryland. Once you have arrived at the inspection site, call WMATC or visit the office to notify staff of your arrival.

Q. What will the inspectors look for during the WMATC inspection?

- A. WMATC inspectors will determine the seating capacity of the vehicle and examine the vehicle markings, license plates, registration card, safety inspection decals, and VIN number. Prior to the time of inspection, ensure the license plates are firmly affixed to the front and back of the vehicle. Also ensure the license plate number on the vehicle matches the license plate number indicated on the vehicle registration card; temporary tags are not acceptable. A copy of the vehicle registration card must be in the vehicle at the time of inspection. Finally, be sure the VIN Number displayed on the driver's side dashboard is not covered so it can be viewed from outside of the vehicle.

Q. What if I miss my vehicle inspection time?

- A. This will delay your application because WMATC will not issue your Certificate of Authority until each vehicle has passed an inspection. Call the Commission to reschedule your inspection time.

Q. Can I have passengers aboard the vehicle at the time of inspection?

- A. No. Commission staff will not inspect a vehicle that has passengers aboard.