



Department of Public Works

**Jeffrey J. Mantes**  
Commissioner of Public Works

**James P. Purko**  
Director of Operations

January 27, 2009

✓ Honorable Robert Donovan, Chair  
Public Safety Committee  
City Hall, Room 205

Honorable Robert Puente, Vice Chair  
Public Safety Committee  
City Hall, Room 205

RE: File Number 081322  
Enforcement of Vehicle Registration Ordinance

Dear Aldermen Donovan and Puente:

Prior to hearing File Number 081322 at the Public Safety meeting on Thursday, January 29, 2009, I would like to provide you with some background information regarding the enforcement of Ordinance 101-24.7 "Unregistered Motor Vehicles".

In early 2007, the State of Wisconsin enacted s.341.18(1) that prohibits parking on public right-of-way (alleys, streets, highways, public ways or thoroughfares) of any vehicle that either is:

- 1) unregistered for more than 31 days; or
- 2) fails to display proof of registration on the state-issued license plates.

As you are aware, people who do not pay their parking violations are unable to register their vehicles. The law seeks to motivate people to register and provide proof that they are registered. One of the benefits of the law is to provide better parking availability for those citizens who comply with laws and who promptly pay their parking citations.

The City formally adopted this statute in Ordinance 101-24.7 and the Department of Public Works began enforcing it in April 2007. Originally, the ordinance did not differentiate between the penalty for unregistered vehicles versus failure to display proof of registration. Citations issued for Violation Code 636 had a \$50 penalty and the vehicles were ordered towed.

Soon after the inception of this new ordinance, the parking operations staff received calls from people indicating that their registration stickers were stolen. The MPD does not complete a report for stolen registration stickers, so there was no method by which to determine whether someone was telling the truth. However, in response, in May 2007, DPW did alter their enforcement policy and required the enforcement officers to call the Parking Information Desk to determine whether or not the vehicle was actually registered. If the vehicle was not registered, the policy remained the same. If the vehicle was registered but did not display proof of registration, it was just ticketed with the \$50 citation. If the same vehicle was found again five or more days later and it still did not display proper registration, it was ordered to be towed.

As people objected to being fined for \$50 when they claimed that their registration stickers were stolen, DPW in conjunction with Alderman Donovan developed another policy and an ordinance change was passed. As of August 2008, anyone whose vehicle was registered but failed to display proper registration was cited with a fine of \$15, while the fine for those unregistered vehicles remained at \$50. Unregistered vehicles continue to be towed.


As you will note by the following table, the number of tickets issued to vehicles for not being registered dropped after the latest change to the ordinance in August 2008. However, the number of vehicles ticketed for failing to display has increased significantly, thus illustrating the magnitude of the problem that exists in the City of Milwaukee with vehicles parked with improper registration display. Because it is impossible for DPW or the Municipal Court to determine which tags were really stolen as claimed by many people who are cited for failure to display, the lower fine (now \$17) serves as a warning to alert people to the need to properly display their registration proof.

Month	UNREGISTERED		FAILURE TO DISPLAY	
	2007	2008	2007	2008
Jan	-	2721	-	-
Feb	-	2029	-	-
Mar	-	3542	-	-
Apr	2106	2956	-	-
May	3067	3748	-	-
Jun	2765	3023	-	-
Jul	2510	2509	-	-
Aug	2839	1360	-	2796
Sep	3130	1390	-	5523
Oct	3091	1402	-	8695
Nov	2538	1309	--	8896
Dec	1749	1206	-	3555
Total	24,429	28,195	-	29,455

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If you desire additional information prior to the hearing, please contact Ms. Cindy Angelos, Parking Finance Manager, at 286-2404.

Very truly yours,



Jeffrey J. Mantes  
Commissioner of Public Works

JJM:CA:ph

c: Alderman Terry Witkowski  
Alderman James Witkowiak  
Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.  
Alderman Robert Bauman  
Cindy Angelos  
File