



Bruce Elfant, Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector and Voter Registrar

News Release

Communications Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 11, 2016

Tax Office grapples with state's single sticker program, rejects about a third of vehicle registration renewals

AUSTIN – It is the second year of Texas' single sticker program and the Travis County Tax Office is rejecting about a third of vehicle registration renewals, mostly due to people obtaining their inspection at the wrong time.

“Not only has single sticker increased the lines at our tax office locations but we are also facing many angry customers because they inspected their vehicles at the wrong time,” said Tax Assessor-Collector Bruce Elfant.

This is the year when vehicle owners are to “sync” the expiration date of their of vehicle inspection to their registration sticker. Unfortunately, customers continue to be confused about how that happens. As a result, the tax office is rejecting about a third of the more than 18,000 vehicle registration renewals it receives each month.

In 2015, the first year of single sticker, the tax office rejected more than 221,000 vehicle registration renewals and it is on pace to do the same this year. Postage alone to return rejected mail-in registrations is costing Travis County taxpayers more than \$30,000 annually.

Many people did not understand they were not to inspect their vehicle until it was time to renew their 2016 registration sticker. “What happened is some inspection stations allowed these people to renew their inspections based on the vehicle owner’s inspection sticker date instead of informing customers they did not need an inspection until the registration sticker was about to expire,” Elfant said. “Now their registration sticker is about to expire and they are finding themselves forced to get another inspection – paying for two inspections in less than a year.”

Inspection stations are under the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). Elfant suggests vehicle owners return to the station that inspected their vehicle to request another inspection free of charge. If the station refuses, report the station that inspected the vehicle too early to DPS.

More confusion also surrounds the 90-day window in which vehicle owners have to renew. “The public clearly does not understand the 90-day window, which means you can inspect your vehicle up to 90 days before your registration sticker expires but no sooner than that,” Elfant said.

Travis County residents either are miscounting the 90 days or some think they need inspection before the 90 days kicks in. Tax office employees are confronted with customers that inspected their vehicles too early, some by only one day. “It is really a difficult situation,” Elfant said.

The best thing vehicle owners can do is forget the 90-day window, Elfant added. Instead, make it simple.

“When you receive your registration renewal notice in the mail know that is the time to inspect your vehicle – not before that,” Elfant said.

To be safe, Elfant encourages everyone to sign up for the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles’ email reminder for registration renewal at www.TxDMV.gov. “This way even if your renewal notice is lost in the mail or you moved and forgot to notify the TxDMV of your new address, you will be sure to receive a reminder that your registration is due, and again, remember that as soon as you see your renewal notice you should take your car or truck in for inspection,” Elfant said.