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DATE: September 23, 2019
TO: All Law Enforcement Agencies
FROM: Robert Kynoch, Director (RK)
Division of Motorist Services
SUBJECT: Use of Dealer License Plates

It has come to our attention that some motor vehicle dealerships have experienced law enforcement actions regarding the use of dealer license plates. We hope this letter can provide clarification.

Section 320.13(1)(a), Florida Statutes, states:

“Any licensed motor vehicle dealer and any licensed mobile home dealer may, upon payment of the license tax imposed by s. 320.08(12), secure one or more dealer license plates, which are valid for use on motor vehicles or mobile homes owned by the dealer to whom such license plates are issued while the motor vehicles are in inventory and for sale, or while being operated in connection with such dealer’s business, but are not valid for use for hire. Dealer license plates may not be used on any tow truck or wrecker unless the tow truck or wrecker is being demonstrated for sale, and the dealer license plates may not be used on a vehicle used to transport another motor vehicle for the motor vehicle dealer.”

The above simply means that dealers may operate vehicles on the highways of Florida at any time as long as the vehicle is in inventory and for sale or while being operated in connection with such dealer’s business. The term “operated in connection with the dealer’s business” may include, but not be limited to the demonstrating of vehicles to prospective purchasers, loaning vehicles to customers while their vehicle is being serviced (as long as no fee is charged), or promoting or advertising the vehicle to the general public. Dealer license plates are not registered to any one vehicle and may be used on any vehicle in that meets the requirements of Section 320.13(1)(a), Florida Statutes. Also, dealers are not required to take title in their name for motor vehicles held in their inventory and for sale.

Hopefully this will clear up any confusion regarding the use of dealer license plates.

RK/kh