

Renew Your Auto License Immediately on Expiration Date

If you knew all that is involved in licensing the state's 750,000 motor vehicles, you'd probably understand why it is important that you renew your licenses immediately upon the expiration date. So says Carl Gabrielson, head of the Secretary of State's motor vehicles division for 31 years.

Take, for example, the story of one application on a new car license, which arrives some morning in the secretary's Salem office. If you think all the secretary has to do is run down to a basement storeroom and select a nice high number for you, you're in for a surprise.

There are some **284 regular employees** of the Department of State in Salem who spend all their working hours processing the estimated 2,000 applications for new and renewed licenses received each day. In addition, the Portland branch and other branches throughout the state bring the motor vehicle licensing payroll to **378 regular employees** and about 27 extra helpers. Before a new car license leaves the care of the state, approximately 20 of these employees have helped process it and ready it for mailing to the car owner.

Since 1949, when the "staggered" licensing was initiated in Oregon, the Herculean task of keeping records on all vehicles in the state has been fairly simple, Gabrielson says.

"There's only one difficulty", he adds. "With no big year-end push to get plates, it's strictly up to the owner to remember to renew his license during the month stamped on the plates. Some never remember until they are arrested and fined for wearing the wrong year tabs."

But, even though the staggered system has simplified the processing job involved in licensing cars, a trip through the motor vehicle division seems to the uninitiated like a trip

through the mirror maze of an amusement park fun house.

When an application arrives in Salem, the first person to handle it is the remittance clerk, a fancy title for the man who takes the \$10 fee, gives the application a number, dates it and then sends it on its way to other processors.

The application is shuttled to a huge file-lined basement room, where men and women check on motor numbers to make certain that a license has never been issued. In addition, on new cars, all attached documents must be carefully scrutinized to assure that all signatures and so forth are in order. If an application passes the probing eyes of the checkers, it is sent to the title department where it is again scanned for legality and validity of title and then given a title number. It's almost official now!

But, first, it goes back to its starting place for another fee check and a balancing of funds. By now, the application is almost half-way through the maze, and its next stop is a room full of typists, who spend eight hours a day, five days a week typing the title and tab numbers on each license slip and new registration card. After the typists have finished, the application heads for the "ditto" room where a battery of duplicating machines turns out ten copies of each application.

Another crew sorts the copies, one of which is sent to the huge master or original application file, its permanent home. The others find their way into such complicated files as the engine number file, the alphabetical file, the numerical file, the Portland numerical, the auditor file and, finally, several go to special services in Portland to provide licensing information to dealers.

This may seem like an undue num-