

Under the Trooper's Hat

April 2025 – Handicap Plates and Placards

By: Trooper Michael Hayen
North Dakota Highway Patrol

For many American Veterans with a physical disability, daily mobility can be a challenge. To help ease some of these difficulties, North Dakota laws are in place to ensure that these Veterans have access to necessary accommodations, including designated handicap parking spaces. However, there is often confusion about whether a Veteran with a disability needs to display a separate handicap placard or if their Disabled American Veteran (DAV) license plate is sufficient.

In North Dakota, DAV license plates always begin with the letters "DAV," which stands for Disabled American Veteran. If you see a vehicle with a plate formatted as "DAV####," it signifies that the driver or an occupant is a disabled Veteran and legally can park in a handicap designated parking space.

A properly issued DAV license plate allows the Veteran to park in designated handicap parking spaces without needing a separate placard. This means that if a Veteran qualifies for a DAV plate, that Veteran is entitled to the same parking privileges as individuals with a standard handicap placard or mobility-impaired license plate.

While many assume that only the traditional blue-and-white handicap placard hanging from the mirror grants access to these parking spaces, it is important for the public to recognize that the DAV#### plate serves the same function. Veterans who display this plate are fully within their rights to park in handicap-designated spots.

To assist with handicap parking, motorists should respect designated accessible parking spaces by ensuring they are not crowded or blocked by other vehicles. It's important not to park in these spaces unless you have a valid disability permit, even if you're just running in for a quick errand. Additionally, always be mindful of the surrounding area, making sure there is enough space for wheelchair ramps and lifts to operate safely. Small gestures like these can make a big difference in supporting those with disabilities.

The mission of the North Dakota Highway Patrol is to make a difference every day by providing high-quality law enforcement services to keep North Dakota safe and secure. NDHP invites you to visit the FAQ section of the website: www.nd.gov/ndhp; like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/northdakotahighwaypatrol; or join us on Instagram, www.instagram.com/ndhighwaypatrol, to learn more about traffic safety, get tips, and read NDHP news. Previous Under the Troopers Hat articles can be found at www.nd.gov/ndhp/safety-and-education/under-troopers-hat.