

Questions and Answers on Transition from Valeron to Plain Paper Sporting Licenses and Tags for Customers

Date: January 25, 2024

Beginning with the 2024-25 hunting license year, DEC is transitioning from special license stock (Valeron) to plain paper licenses and tags. The following questions and answers provide information on how this change will impact License Issuing Agents (LIAs) and licensed hunters, trappers, and anglers. This document will be updated as we progress through this transition and as more details become available.

General

Q: What is the new license/tag transition and when will it occur?

A: Beginning in August 2024, DEC will change the type of paper used for sporting licenses and carcass tags from special license stock (Valeron) to plain paper. At the same time, DEC will allow hunters, trappers, and anglers to print their licenses and tags from home. This transition will provide more flexibility in delivery of sporting licenses and allow for easier and quicker access to recreational activities. This license and tag transition will occur on August 1, 2024, when 2024-25 licenses are available for purchase. This transition will not affect spring turkey season in April and May 2024.

Q: Why is DEC changing from durable Valeron license stock to plain paper?

A: In addition to reducing the agencies carbon footprint and modernizing the way sporting licenses are fulfilled and utilized afield, DEC, along with other state conservation agencies around the country, has experienced difficulties acquiring Valeron stock in recent years due to supply chain issues and increased costs. Over the last few years, many states such as Ohio, Oregon, New Hampshire and Virginia, have successfully shifted to plain paper and digital licenses and tags, providing a good framework to guide our transition.

Q: What kind of paper, ink, and printer will be needed to print licenses and tags?

A: Whether printing licenses and tags at a License Issuing Agent (LIA) location or at home, licenses and tags will print on standard 8½ x 11-inch paper with black ink. Licenses and tags can be printed with laser, inkjet, or solid ink printers.

Hunters, Trappers, and Anglers

Q: How will hunters, trappers, and anglers get licenses and tags?

A: Hunters, trappers, and anglers will still be able to purchase their licenses online, over the phone, and at a LIA location. They will have the option to receive their licenses and tags via email so they can print at home.

Q: Will Lifetime Hunting License holders still receive their licenses and tags in the mail?

A: Yes, lifetime license holders should receive their licenses and tags in the mail by September 1, 2024, printed on plain paper.

Q: What can hunters, trappers, and anglers show to an Environmental Conservation Police Officer (ECO) as a proof of licensure when afield?

A: Hunters and trappers will have the option of carrying a plain paper copy of their license, or an electronic copy of their license in the free [HuntFishNY](#) mobile app. In addition to the paper copy of their license and the electronic license in the HuntFishNY app, anglers can also provide an officer with their 12-digit, DEC ID number. Currently, the only option for backtags and carcass tags is plain paper.

Q: If the new tags are plain paper and not weather resistant, won't they get damaged when afield hunting?

A: It is the hunter's responsibility to protect their license and tags. Carcass tags must still be filled out, dated, signed, and attached to the animal as required by regulation. DEC suggests storing licenses and

tags in a waterproof bag or container while hunting and placing the completed carcass tag in a zip-top bag or other reusable waterproof protector and securely fastening it to the deer, bear, or turkey to ensure the tag remains protected and legible. Tags do not have to be attached to the carcass while it is being dragged or physically carried from the field but must be attached as soon as it is taken to a home, camp, or point where transportation is available.

Q: How will the change to plain paper carcass tags affect hunters who take their deer, bear, or turkey to a processor or taxidermist?

A: The use of plain paper carcass tags will not result in a significant change for hunters who take their deer, bear, or turkey to a processor or taxidermist. Hunters will still be required to fill out, date, sign, and attach the tag to the animal, and are also responsible for protecting the tag so it remains legible. DEC recommends placing the completed carcass tag in a zip-top bag or other reusable waterproof protector and securely fastening it to the deer, bear, or turkey to ensure the tag remains protected and legible.

Q: What should hunters, trappers, or anglers do if they lose their license or tags or if the paper gets destroyed?

A: Hunters, trappers, and anglers may obtain plain paper replacements of their licenses and tags from an in-person license sales agent replacement fees will apply, or they may freely reprint the licenses and tags from their online account or from the PDF included in the email associated with their original license purchase. Also, hunters, trappers, and anglers may use the HuntFishNY app as an electronic copy of their license.

Q: Are hunters still required to report their harvests?

A: Absolutely! Successful hunters are required by law to report the harvest of deer, bear, and turkey. DEC's recommends reporting via the HuntFishNY app immediately as you also fill out the tag. This report can be made even if you do not have cell service and will automatically be transmitted when you have service. [Harvest reports can also be completed online](#) or by phone (1-866-426-3778). For more information on [game harvest reporting visit the DEC website](#).

Q: Won't the option to print from home increase illegal use of tags?

A: While the vast majority of hunters, trappers and anglers are honest and ethical, there unfortunately are a small percentage of individuals who abuse the system, regardless of the tagging process. Plain paper licenses and tags have been used successfully in states across the country without evidence of an increase in fraud. Division of Fish and Wildlife staff are working closely with the Division of Law Enforcement to ensure that the use of plain paper licenses and tags and electronic licenses are compatible with compliance and enforcement needs. As with any rules and regulations associated with hunting, when abuses are discovered, those individuals will be charged accordingly.

Q: Why doesn't DEC use electronic tags like some other states?

A: New York State law does not currently allow DEC to issue electronic carcass tags. Current law requires hunters to fill out their carcass tags with a permanent pen or indelible pencil immediately after harvesting an animal. The law also requires that hunters wear a physical back tag. These legal requirements cannot be met electronically. If the law changes in the future, DEC will evaluate the use of electronic tags.

License Issuing Agents LIAs)

Q: When will the change to printing licenses and tags on plain paper occur?

A: The change to printing licenses and tags on plain printing paper will begin August 1, 2024, when hunting licenses for the new license year go on sale.

Q: Will DEC supply LIAs with plain paper printers, plain paper, and ink?

A: No, DEC will not supply plain paper printers, paper, or ink. To help cover the cost of the use of agent equipment and supplies DEC will be proposing a regulation change that would allow License Issuing Agents to collect an additional printing fee. This fee, if approved, would automatically be applied to the

transaction carried out in the DEC Automated Licensing System (DECALS) when a customer opts to have their license and tags printed at the point of sale.

Q: What should LIAs do with the leftover Valeron license paper and the Valeron/Zebra printer?

A: Leftover Valeron stock should be recycled or disposed of (Valeron can be recycled by facilities that handle HDPE plastic #2). It does not need to be returned to DEC. More information on the handling of the Zebra license printers will be sent to LIAs in the coming weeks. LIAs should look for messages in DECALS and through GovDelivery for further direction.

Q: Will LIAs be able to sell licenses from more than one computer at their location?

A: Yes. Once the transition is made, the DECALS system will no longer look for a special license printer and will allow printing licenses and tags through the printers you have available at your sales location. This should give locations the ability to sell licenses in DECALS from more than one computer.

Q: Will there be any special steps to take with printer installation so that it can work with DECALS?

A: No. Once the change is made to plain paper printing, printing licenses and tags to your printer should work in the same way as when you print other documents in your office.

Q: Will there be a need to maintain and return misprinted licenses and carcass tags (aka "returnable documents")?

A: No. Misprinted copies of licenses and carcass tags should be shredded and recycled/disposed of accordingly.

Q: Will there still be a fee for replacing licenses and carcass tags?

A: Yes. If someone comes to a LIA to replace their licenses and/or carcass tags outside the DEC designated free lifetime replacement period or when a free replacement is allowed, replacement fees will still apply. Replacements should be processed in a separate transaction and will still cost \$5 for licenses, privileges, and permits, while replacement for carcass tags will cost \$10. Customers can avoid replacement fees by reprinting at home from their DECALS account or from the PDF documents that were emailed to them with their original purchase. More information on replacement fees can be found on DEC's [General Sporting License Information webpage](#).