

Understanding the Illinois Secretary of State's "J88" Driver's License Notation

The Illinois Secretary of State's "J88" driver's license notation is explained at page 9, in their publication currently on the Secretary of State's Cyberdriveillinois.com entitled "A Guide to Services" "Serving Senior Citizens, Persons with Disabilities, and Veterans".

"J88" — Deaf/Hard of Hearing Driver's License

"J88" is a notation on a driver's license that alerts law enforcement officers before approaching a vehicle that a motorist is deaf or hard of hearing. Following is how the "J88" notation works:

- **Request the "J88" notation be added to your driver's license at any Secretary of State Driver Services facility. "J88" will appear on both the front and back of your driver's license.**
- **Include your driver's license number on your vehicle registration to link the two together.**
- **If you are stopped by a law enforcement officer, he/she will run your license plate or driver's license number, and a "Deaf/Hard of Hearing: Uses Alternative Communication" message will appear. The officer will then know to use alternative communication.**
- **You must request the "J88" notation. No forms or Secretary of State personnel will ask you to include it on your driver's license.**

A careful reading of the forgoing description reveals that this is a twostep process. The "J88" notation needs to be added to the individual's driver's license, and the individual must then have his or her driver's license number added to their vehicle registration. This will link the vehicle registration and the driver's license. The driver's license will have the "J88" notation. Thus, when a Police Officer, making a traffic stop, runs the vehicle's license plate number, he will see a driver's license number on the vehicle registration on file in the Secretary of State's records. The Officer then must run the driver's license number to see the notation "Deaf/Hard of Hearing: Uses Alternative Communication". Note, the foregoing does not say that the "J88" notation or the "Deaf/Hard of Hearing: Uses Alternative Communication" notation will be on the vehicle registration. Those notations are on the driver's license information in the Secretary of State's records. The driver's license number is not normally included on a vehicle registration because the driver of the car may not be the same person as the owner of the vehicle. The inclusion of that driver's license number should be a clue to the Police Officer making the stop that further information is available by running the driver's license number. Under normal circumstances, the officer would not check the driver's license number until after obtaining the driver's license from the stopped vehicle's driver.