RCW 46.18.280 Purple Heart license plates. (1) A registered owner who has been awarded a Purple Heart medal by any branch of the United States armed forces, including the merchant marines and the women's air forces service pilots may apply to the department for special license plates for use on a motor vehicle required to display one or two license plates, excluding vehicles registered under chapter 46.87 RCW, upon terms and conditions established by the department, and owned by the qualified applicant. The applicant must:

(a) Be a resident of this state;

(b) Have been wounded during one of this nation's wars or conflicts identified in RCW 41.04.005;

(c) Have received a qualifying discharge, as defined in RCW 73.04.005, from the United States armed forces;

(d) Provide a copy of the armed forces document showing the recipient was awarded the Purple Heart medal; and

(e) Be recorded as the registered owner of the motor vehicle on which the Purple Heart license plate or plates will be displayed.

(2) Purple Heart license plates must be issued without the payment of any vehicle license fees, license plate fees, motor vehicle excise taxes, and special license plate fees for one motor vehicle. For other motor vehicles, qualified applicants may purchase Purple Heart license plates for the fee required under *RCW 46.17.220(18) and all other fees and taxes required by law for registering the motor vehicle.

(3) Purple Heart license plates may be issued to the surviving spouse or domestic partner of a Purple Heart recipient who met the requirements in subsection (1) of this section. The surviving spouse or domestic partner must be a resident of this state. If the surviving spouse remarries or the surviving domestic partner marries or enters into a new domestic partnership, he or she must return the special license plates to the department within fifteen days and apply for regular license plates or another type of special license plate.

(4) A Purple Heart license plate or plates may be transferred from one motor vehicle to another motor vehicle owned by the Purple Heart recipient or the surviving spouse or domestic partner as described in subsection (3) of this section upon application to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director. [2024 c 146 s 26; 2019 c 139 s 1; 2016 c 31 s 1; 2011 c 332 s 8; 2010 c 161 s 628.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 46.17.220 was amended by 2025 c 385 s 4, changing subsection (18) to subsection (25), effective November 1, 2025.

Effective date—2024 c 146 ss 25-27: See note following RCW 46.18.270.

Intent—2024 c 146: See note following RCW 73.04.005.

Effective date—2016 c 31: "This act takes effect July 1, 2017." [2016 c 31 s 5.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.