

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to Their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and has the honor to provide the following policy information regarding motor vehicles owned or operated by foreign missions and personnel and requests this information be provided to all personnel.

I. OPERATION OF MOTOR VEHICLES IN THE UNITED STATES

The operation of motor vehicles by foreign missions and their personnel, and dependents of such personnel, is a benefit granted by the Department of State under the authority of the Congress of the United States and is dependent upon observance of requirements established by the Department. Failure to comply with the Department's requirements may result in withdrawal of this benefit.

II. REGISTRATION

All motor vehicles owned or operated (including leased vehicles and vehicles rented for more than 30 days) by foreign missions and their personnel, and dependents of such personnel, must be registered with the Diplomatic Motor Vehicle Office (DMVO) of the Office of Foreign Missions (OFM).

All personal vehicles will be registered in the name of a sponsor (accredited mission member). If a vehicle is owned by a bona fide dependent, the name of his/her sponsor will be shown as registered owner and the dependent's name will be shown as "co-owner". At the time of disposition, the name of the actual owner(s) will appear on the title.

Missions and personnel are reminded that all vehicle ownership documentation must be submitted to the DMVO with an application for registration. This documentation may include, but is not limited to, Certificates of Origin for new vehicles, state titles for used vehicles, and state "applications for title" received at the time of purchase.

III. LIABILITY INSURANCE

All motor vehicles owned or operated by foreign missions and their personnel, and dependents of such personnel, must be insured at or above minimum limits. These are: \$300,000 "combined single limit" or "split limits" of \$100,000 bodily injury per person, \$300,000 bodily injury per accident, and \$100,000 property damage. Failure to maintain this coverage will result in deregistration of the vehicle(s). In order to ensure that proper insurance is continuously maintained, the DMVO must receive all notifications of termination, modification or cancellations to currently held policies.

The DMVO requires proof of valid insurance at these levels when registering vehicles, renewing registrations, issuing temporary tags for export, and issuing replacement plates.

IV. COMPLIANCE

The DMVO has initiated a program, with the cooperation of the states, to identify foreign mission personnel who have registered vehicles with state jurisdictions contrary to Department policy. The states will prevent any transactions regarding those registrations without the authorization of the DMVO. If a mission member is discovered to have a vehicle registered with a state jurisdiction in contravention of the Department's requirement, the mission will be advised. The Department expects the mission to instruct the individual to register the vehicle with the DMVO immediately or face withdrawal of the benefit to operate a vehicle in the United States.

V. APPLICATION FORMS

In order to facilitate processing of applications for motor vehicle services, missions are encouraged to use typewriters when completing the forms. The forms are designed to accommodate personal computer printers and similar office automation devices. The DMVO will, however, continue to accept neatly printed applications.

VI. PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION (PID) NUMBERS

Missions are reminded that "personal identification" (PID) numbers have been issued to each accredited member of a mission and each dependent of such member by the Office of Protocol. They should be included on all applications for services. The use of PID numbers on application forms will, in many cases, decrease processing time.

VII. LICENSE PLATES

The DMVO issues two permanent license plates for each registered vehicle (with the exception of motorcycles and trailers). Both license plates must be displayed on the appropriate vehicle at all times, one on the front and one on the rear. All law enforcement agencies in the United States have been informed of this requirement. Police officers will issue citations for failure to display license plates when vehicles are observed bearing only one plate. Missions and their personnel should immediately report lost or stolen plates to the DMVO in Washington, D.C. at (202) 673-5312, or to the OFM Field Office in New York at (212) 685-1301, in Chicago at (312) 353-5764, or in San Francisco at (415) 556-8994. Missions and their personnel must immediately apply for replacement plates upon reporting lost or stolen plates. Under no circumstances shall a vehicle be operated until replacement plates are issued.

VIII. HANDICAP PLATES

The DMVO issues handicap license plates to qualified persons. To obtain these plates, the mission member must submit a signed statement from a physician certifying that handicap plates are warranted and indicating whether the medical condition is permanent or temporary. A medical statement may be submitted either with the original application for registration or at a later time with an application for replacement plates.

IX. VEHICLE SALES WITHIN THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY

Processing of vehicle sales within the diplomatic community requires that the seller's "Application for Title" (Form DSP102) and the buyer's "Application for Registration" (Form DSP100 or DSP101) be submitted simultaneously. If one of these forms is missing, the DMVO will return the other form to the mission unprocessed. The buyer has the responsibility to ensure that all application forms and the seller's license plates are returned to the DMVO. The buyer's new license plates will be released only after the DMVO receives the seller's plates.

X. PERSONNEL TERMINATIONS

Missions are responsible for ensuring that terminating personnel return their license plates to the DMVO. These license plates are the property of the United States Government and under no circumstances may they be used by unauthorized persons; they may not be removed from the United States.

Personnel who are terminating employment with one mission and gaining employment with a different mission must return the license plates issued during their present employment and apply for new plates in accordance with their new employment. Such a person must submit an "Application for Title" (Form DSP102), bearing the seal of the present mission, listing himself/herself as both the seller and the buyer of the vehicle and submit an "Application for Registration for a Personal Vehicle" (Form DSP101) bearing the seal of the future mission.

XI. COUNTY/CITY AND RESIDENTIAL PARKING STICKERS

Some county and city jurisdictions in the United States require motor vehicles to carry stickers showing that local taxes have been paid or that parking in a residential area is authorized. Missions and their members should determine if such stickers are required and, if so, acquire them. Problems in this area should be reported to the DMVO so that assistance can be provided.

Mission personnel residing in the Commonwealth of Virginia must display county/city stickers on the windshield of their vehicles. Police officers may ticket vehicles that do not display current stickers. Stickers can be obtained without charge by presenting a copy of the Department's vehicle registration card to the proper city/county Office of Assessments in Virginia. There may be residential parking sticker requirements in some cities in northern Virginia. Contact local law enforcement offices for information regarding such requirements.

Mission personnel residing in some areas of the District of Columbia must display residential parking stickers. Police officers may ticket vehicles that do not display current stickers. Stickers can be obtained without charge by presenting a copy of the Department's vehicle registration card to the Division of Motor Vehicles, 301 "C" Street, NW, Room 1063, Washington, D.C.

XII. TRAFFIC CITATIONS

Missions are reminded that persons enjoying diplomatic privileges and immunities have a duty under international

law, as codified in Article 41 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving state. The missions are also reminded that the Department no longer requests the cancellation of traffic citations on behalf of diplomatic missions. The Department takes the position that any fines incurred through the violation of local traffic ordinances should be paid. Failure to do so may result in the suspension of driving privileges.

XIII. VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

The DMVO does not currently require vehicle inspections for purposes of registration or sale. If a mission or member of a mission receives a citation from a police officer for failure to display a valid inspection sticker, the mission may forward the citation to the DMVO for dismissal. Missions and their members are reminded that it is the owner's responsibility to maintain their vehicles in safe operating condition, however, citations can and will be issued for operating unsafe vehicles. The most common violations result from worn tires or defective lights.

Department of State,

Washington, 26 October 1989

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