

06-270

The Secretary of State presents her compliments to Their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and wishes to inform them of a change in policy concerning the Department of State driver license and non-driver identification (ID) card issued to eligible mission members and their dependents by the Office of Foreign Missions (OFM). The Department has decided that these documents, which are the property of the United States Government, must be returned to OFM when the purpose for which they were issued is no longer valid, *i.e.* upon termination of a mission member's tour of duty.

Article 39(2) of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and Article 53(3) of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations provide that a departing diplomatic agent's or consular officer's privileges and immunities cease "on expiry of a reasonable period" after termination of employment/status. In implementing these provisions, the Department extends the privileges and immunities of outgoing diplomatic agents and consular officers for 30 days after termination, after which time such privileges and immunities cease.

Consistent with that policy and effective immediately, unless otherwise requested by OFM at an earlier time, all driver licenses and non-driver ID cards issued to eligible mission members and their dependents must be returned to OFM within 30 days following the termination of eligible mission members from their diplomatic or consular assignments in the United States. The driver license and non-driver ID card are considered expired after this 30 day period and driving privileges in the United States using the Department of State drivers' license likewise cease.

The Chiefs of Mission are reminded and are requested to inform all mission members that operation of a motor vehicle with an expired Department driver license is a serious violation of U.S. traffic regulations and a threat to public safety. As such, offending individuals are subject to traffic citations when stopped by law enforcement officials and must comply with any follow-on legal actions, *e.g.* fines and/or judicial proceedings. The cited individual's invalid driver license will also be confiscated.

Mission members are advised to maintain the validity of their home country-issued driver license during their tour of duty in the United States to mitigate any administrative concerns upon re-assignment. Mission members

may also obtain a copy of their individual motor vehicle record from OFM upon official written request by their mission.

Additional information is available in the Department's publication, Guidance for Administrative Officers, on OFM's internet home page at www.state.gov/ofm.

Department of State,

Washington,

DEC 1 2 2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a series of loops and a final flourish.