

94-333

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and refers to the Department's note No. 93-555, dated December 22, 1993, to draw their attention to the new motor vehicle registration policy which regards the payment of parking tickets issued in the District of Columbia. This policy became effective January 1, 1994.

Beginning January 1, 1995, the Department will withhold the registration renewal of vehicles of foreign missions and their staffs where District of Columbia records show unpaid parking tickets issued on such a vehicle, on or after January 1, 1994, which are more than 1 year old. Registration renewal will not be withheld if the vehicle owner presents proof showing that the ticket is being adjudicated or that the ticket has been paid.

An example may clarify the new procedure: A ticket is issued to a vehicle in March 1994. The vehicle's registration is scheduled for annual renewal in June. In June 1994 the registration is renewed as the ticket is three months old. If the same ticket remains unpaid or is not in the process of being adjudicated in June 1995, i.e., fifteen months later, the registration will not be renewed. The vehicle will not receive a new decal and registration document, and it can no longer be operated legally in the United States.

The Department cautions missions that unregistered vehicles with expired registration decals are subject to being stopped by police. While the inviolability of diplomatic personnel and vehicles must be strictly respected in such circumstances, this does not mean that local authorities are obliged to permit an

unregistered vehicle to operate on local streets. In these cases, the owner may be required either to park the vehicle nearby, if legally permissible, or to arrange at the owner's expense for the vehicle to be towed to the mission or to the owner's residence or other place of safekeeping. Moreover, the Department notes that in the event of an accident, the insurer often contests coverage when the vehicle has been de-registered.

As the Department has no authority to adjudicate traffic citations or otherwise intercede with the government of the District on such matters, all inquiries should be directed to District authorities. The Department encourages mission members who believe that a ticket has been issued improperly, or who wish to assert an emergency or other defense, to avail themselves of the District of Columbia adjudication process. To contest a citation the mission or mission member may send a representative to appear at the Bureau of Traffic Adjudication, located at 65 K Street, N.W. Mail adjudication is also available; correspondence should be directed to Ms. Joan Bailey, Chief, Bureau of Traffic Adjudication, 65 K Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-4216. Payments for parking tickets may be made to the D.C. Treasurer and sent to the Bureau of Traffic Adjudication, P.O. Box 2014, Washington, D.C. 20013.

At the time of registration renewal if a citation has been recently paid or is in the process of adjudication, the mission or mission member should send proof of payment (e.g., a cancelled check or receipt from the District of Columbia indicating payment) or a copy of the citation (if available), and proof that the citation is being adjudicated (e.g., copies of correspondence to and from District of Columbia) to Office of Foreign Missions, Attention Mr. Cory Zeman, 3507 International Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008. Questions regarding this policy may be directed to Mr. Zeman at (202) 895-3559.

Department of State,

Washington, DEC 16 1994

