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INFORMATION FOR TRAVELERS WHO DRIVE TO MEXICO

Incidents involving U.S. citizens who were injured in traffic crashes in Mexico have highlighted the significant differences between the legal systems of Mexico and the United States. If you are involved in a motor vehicle crash in Mexico, it is likely that you will be detained until the local authorities can determine fault. If you are in need of medical attention, you will generally be taken to the closest medical facility for treatment while the authorities investigate the incident. If you are found to be at fault, you will be required to demonstrate financial responsibility and post a bond to cover the estimated costs before you will be released. Financial responsibility can be demonstrated in one of two ways:

- Possession of cash, but remember that fines may vary depending on the violation or accident. **OR**
- Possession of automobile insurance that is issued through an **authorized Mexican insurance company**. The Secretary of Tourism recommends that you obtain full coverage insurance for your automobile.
- **THE AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE THAT YOU HAVE FOR DRIVING IN THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT SATISFY THIS REQUIREMENT.**

In order to minimize potential problems while driving in Mexico, it is suggested that you adhere to the following tips:

- **DON'T DRINK and DRIVE.**
- Always obtain *Mexican* automobile insurance to cover **LIABILITY** and **LEGAL ASSISTANCE**. Such coverage is readily available from several established firms in San Diego County, at a cost of about \$12.00 for one day, with decreasing rates for longer stays. It is recommended that you obtain full coverage insurance for your automobile.
- If you stay in Mexico for longer than 7 days, you must have an FM-T tourist permit. Such permits now cost 250.00 Mexican pesos or the equivalent in U.S. dollars, are valid for up to six months, and may be obtained at the National Immigration Institute located at the border. The FM-T permit can be paid for at any bank operating in Mexico.
- The Secretary of Tourism in Baja California has established tourist corridors where there is no need to pay the tourist permit fee. Those corridors are:
 - Tijuana - Ensenada
 - Sonoita - Puerto Peñasco
 - Ciudad Juarez - Paquime
 - Piedras Negras - Santarosa
 - Reynosa - China - Presa el Cuchillo
- If it is determined that the consumption of alcohol or drugs contributed to a traffic crash, your Mexican insurance will **not** be valid. Do not drive while even slightly 'under the

influence'.

HAVE A DESIGNATED DRIVER.

- It is **STRICTLY FORBIDDEN** to bring firearms or ammunition into Mexico. If you do so, and you are caught, you will go to jail. If you plan to hunt in Mexico, visit the Mexican Consulate to obtain necessary permits.
- When driving in Mexico, remember that speed limits are posted in kilometers per hour rather than miles per hour. Obey the speed limits and other traffic controls.
- Always carry a valid I.D.
- Always use your seatbelt.
- It is a traffic violation to use a cellular phone while driving in the state of Baja California.
- If you are on a motorcycle, remember that Mexico has a helmet law.
- Along certain Mexican roads and highways you will find military checkpoints where you may be subjected to a routine search. Please cooperate and be patient.

Please remember that it is illegal to:

- Drink and drive.
- Drink in public and or have an open container.
- Disturb the peace (fighting, nudity or immoral conduct)
- Possess, bring or use any weapon (Federal Felony)
- Possess, bring or consume drugs (Federal Felony)
- Possess and or use false documents.

Remember, you are visiting another country. Respect and obey their laws, just as we expect visitors to our country to obey our laws.

VISITOR INFORMATION & EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Several resources are available to help plan for an enjoyable trip to Mexico. Should you experience an emergency while traveling in Mexico, there are various agencies that may be contacted for assistance.

State Secretary of Tourism of Baja California

State Tourist Assistance Offices are located in major towns and cities throughout the Baja peninsula. If you need legal aid or wish to register a complaint, bilingual staff in these offices will be able to assist you during regular business hours. Please visit the web site at www.discoverbajacalifornia.com. Below are the latest posted phone numbers for the local offices:

- Tijuana(664) 973-0424
- Rosarito (661) 612-5222
- Ensenada (646) 172-3022
- Mexicali (686) 566-1277
- Tecate (665) 654-1095
- San Felipe (686) 577-1865
- **Visitor's Assistance HotLine Dial 078**

American Embassy in Mexico

www.usembassy-mexico.gov , click English

United States Consulate General Tijuana

<http://tijuana.usconsulate.gov/>

From the U.S. 01152-664-622-7400

From Tijuana (664) 622-7400

Hours: 8 am - 4:30 pm (Monday - Friday)

State Department Emergency Center, Office of Overseas Citizens Services (call from the US)

(888) 407-4747 (during business hours)

(202) 647-5225 (after hours)

Green Angels

Tijuana - Ensenada (800) 990-3900

Tijuana - Tecate (800) 888-0911

The Green Angels are a federally sponsored organization that patrols Mexico's main highways 24 hours / 7 days a week. The Green Angels are trained mechanics that are also trained in basic first aid and carry oil, gasoline, spare parts, tools and communications capabilities. You will only be charged for the equipment used; i.e. gasoline or spare parts, not for the mechanics services. The Green Angels get their name from the green and white trucks they drive.

Auto Club of Southern California

The Auto Club of Southern California has additional information regarding legal and insurance issues in Mexico on their web site at www.aaa-calif.com. This information can be accessed without being a member.

Authorities Misconduct

If you feel that any public official or law enforcement authority has mistreated you, you can file a complaint. Make sure to get person's name, agency, badge or patrol car number, as well as place and time of the incident and report it immediately to the **Tourist Assistance Hotline 078**.