



REDSTONE LEGAL BRIEF

A Preventive Law Service of The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate
Redstone Arsenal, AL

Keeping You Informed On Personal Legal Affairs



Auto Registration

THIS HANDOUT

is provided for general information purposes; it does not constitute legal advice. If you have specific questions, call 876-9005 to make an appointment with a legal assistance attorney.

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AUTOMOBILES

ALABAMA REGISTRATION AND LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

1. **Introduction:** One of the most frequently asked questions by military members stationed at Redstone Arsenal is whether they and their immediate family have to register their privately owned vehicles in Alabama and under what circumstances do they have to obtain an Alabama driver's license.

2. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS:

a. **Federal Law:** Under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act military members who comply with the motor vehicle registration requirement of the state of their legal residence do not have to register their vehicles in the state where they are stationed pursuant to military orders. (50 U.S.C. App. Sec 574) This means that military members recently stationed at Redstone Arsenal can continue to drive in Alabama without registering their vehicles in Alabama as long as their registration from their home state of legal residence is current. At the time their registration expires, military members can renew their home-state registration. However, this protection does not apply to spouses. Therefore, one must look to the state law to see if spouses are protected.

b. **Alabama Law:** In accordance with the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, military personnel may display a current license plate from their home state or from the state the members are stationed in.

c. **Immediate Family in Alabama but Member PCSs:** When a nonresident military member, whose motor vehicles currently are registered in his or her home state, is stationed in Alabama and is shipped overseas from Alabama and the member's immediate family remains in Alabama, it is not necessary that the spouse register his or her motor vehicles in Alabama. However, if such military member returns from overseas to a state other than Alabama and the spouse elects to stay in Alabama, the motor vehicles must be registered in Alabama if they are operated in this state.

d. **Definition of "Immediate Family":** Immediate family is defined as the spouse of any military and any natural, adoptive, or step child of the member.

3. **When Registration Is Required:** All individuals choose to become Alabama legal residents, such as by applying for the homestead exemption, must register their vehicles with the State of Alabama.

a. **Initial Registration:** Anyone who registers a vehicle in Alabama must pay all taxes and fees unless he or she qualifies for exemptions.

b. The registration of any motor vehicle owned by and operated exclusively for the personal use of :

(1) Any member of the Armed Forces, or the spouse or dependent child, who is not a resident of this state and who is stationed in this state while in compliance with military orders.

(2) Also, when members purchase vehicles out-of-state and then bring them into Alabama, they must pay the Alabama Sales Tax if a sales tax was not paid to the state where the vehicle was purchased. Further, if a vehicle was purchased from an individual in Alabama, the sales tax must also be paid.

4. Conditions Under Which Military Members And Their Dependents Must Obtain An Alabama Driver's License:

All legal residents of the State of Alabama must obtain an Alabama driver's license to drive in Alabama. However, military members stationed in Alabama and their dependents are not required to obtain an Alabama driver's license to drive in Alabama if they already have a valid and current driver's license from the state of their legal residence.

5. Where To Register Your Vehicle: Vehicles can be registered at the Motor Vehicle Registration office located at the Redstone One Stop on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Remember to ask about any and all exemptions that you may be entitled to receive.