

Dear foreign journalists,

## **An important change took effect on 17 September 2014, in the law regarding driver's licenses.**

In the wake of a contradiction in the regulation regarding the use of foreign driver's licenses in Israel by foreign nationals, the Minister of Transportation approved a significant change in order to correct the regulation.



The new regulation determines that a foreign driver's license held by any foreign national (over the age of 17) will be valid in Israel for a period of 1 year from the date of last entry to Israel (so far – no change).

The new regulation redefines "last entry to Israel" and states that last entry is "the last entry to Israel which followed a stay of 3 consecutive months outside of Israel".

In other words, only an absence from Israel of at least 3 consecutive months will reset the count for another one year of driving with a foreign license.

If a foreign national (journalist or not) enters and departs the country frequently, but is never absent from Israel for three consecutive months, he or she must convert their foreign license to Israeli license (including a one-off road test, with no theory test). Converting the license is done at the Ministry of Transportation only, and the GPO has no role or influence in this process.

In addition, please note:

• **Regarding insurance, it is the responsibility of the driver to coordinate with his or her insurance company / car rental company that he/she is fully insured using a foreign license.**

• Those whose last entry to Israel was before the due-date of 17 September 2014, could still use their foreign driver's license for a period of 1 year from their last entry – but this is controversial - see examples below.

• All the above refers to driving a vehicle under 3.5 tons (Categories A + B). For heavy vehicles (Categories C + D + E) your license will be valid in Israel only if less than three months have passed since the last entry.

• Driver's licenses from enemy countries, i.e. Lebanon, Syria, Iran, are not valid in Israel under any circumstances. If your license was issued by a country that does not have diplomatic relations with Israel, please check in advance if this applies to you.

• This announcement replaces the GPO announcements of 12 September 2013, 19 February 2014 and 12 March 2014.

- This announcement pertains to all foreign citizens (i.e, not Israeli residents or citizens), including journalists and their family members.

The GPO urges foreign journalists and their spouses living in Israel to obtain Israeli driver's licenses as soon as possible in order to prevent potential conflict with their insurance company in a case of an accident. There are several private companies in Israel that assist foreign nationals with the license conversion process, for a fee.

## **Examples**

- I was absent Israel for more than 3 consecutive months, and I came back on 15.9.14. Till when is my foreign license valid? Answer: 15.9.15.
- I was absent Israel for more than 3 consecutive months, and I came back on 1.10.14. Till when is my foreign license valid? Answer: 1.10.15.
- I came to Israel less than a year ago, and since then I entered and exited Israel but was never absent the country for 3 consecutive months. My last entry was on 1.10.14. Till when is my foreign license valid? Answer: Until a year from the date of your first entry.
- I came to Israel over a year ago, and since then I entered and exited Israel but was never absent the country for 3 consecutive months. My last entry was on 15.9.14. Till when is my foreign license valid? Answer: Theoretically until 15.9.15, but it is debatable. That's why the regulation has been changed. We recommend converting to an Israeli license or finding competent legal counsel in the event of an accident.
- I came to Israel over a year ago, and since then I entered and exited Israel but was never absent the country for 3 consecutive months. My last entry was on 1.10.14. Till when is my foreign license valid? Answer: It is no longer valid. Convert to Israeli license ASAP!

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Drive safely!

\*[Regulation in original Hebrew version.](#)