



International Driver's License Scams

From the Office of Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson

“Are the blemishes on your driving record skyrocketing your car insurance rate? Has your driver's license been suspended? Do you need a valid form of identification? How about a universally recognized driver's license that can never be suspended or ticketed? For limited time only, you can apply to get an official International Driver's License for only \$400. In only 24 hours, you can get a driver's license that is recognized by over 180 nations worldwide, including the United States. Get yours today!”

Sound familiar? In recent years, International Driver's License Scams have become more prevalent. **Do not be scammed by phony advertisements.**

How the Scam Works

Consumers may receive a flyer or email advertising the “international driver's license” as a valid form of identification and an irrevocable license to drive. The prices for these phony licenses range from \$20 to over \$450. Not only are these advertised claims false, the use of such licenses may actually put the user at risk of criminal prosecution. For instance, in one form of the scam, the phony license will list a foreign address instead of the owner's true address. Thus, if pulled over, the address on the license will differ from that of the vehicle registration. The driver may get in trouble for lying to the police about their place of residence.

International Driving Permits - Know the Facts!

Legitimate International Driving Permits (IDPs) do exist, and some travel agencies recommend obtaining one before traveling abroad. It is important, however, to know that an IDP is not a substitute for a valid driver's license issued by your country of

residence; it is merely a translation of your regular driver's license into almost a dozen languages. Knowledge and awareness about real IDPs are the best protections against International Driver's License Scams imitating the real thing. Know the facts:

- Although the IDP was authorized in 1949 when the United States signed the United Nations Convention on International Road Traffic, it is not valid by itself and must be presented with a valid driver's license issued from the driver's country of residence.

- The IDP looks similar to a passport. It is multi-paged and contains *two* (2) passport photos. It is also printed in nearly a dozen languages including English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, Chinese and Arabic.

- You cannot use an IDP while you are in your own country. Furthermore, because you do not get a new or separate driving record with an IDP, it cannot be used to hide speeding tickets or other traffic violations.

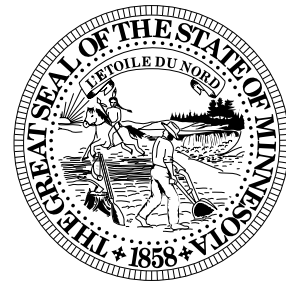
- You must purchase your IDP in your country of residence. In the United States, only two organizations are authorized to sell real, legal IDPs: the American Automobile Association (AAA) and the American Automobile Touring Alliance (AATA). The National Automobile Club processes IDP applications for AATA. **All other vendors are prohibited by law from selling IDPs.**

- The fee for obtaining a real IDP is only \$10. Beware of emails pretending to be from AAA or AATA trying to sell you an IDP for more money.

For more information on how to obtain a real International Driving Permit, you may contact AAA and the National Automobile Club as follows:

AAA Minnesota/Iowa
600 West Travelers Trail
Burnsville, MN 55337-2518
(800) 222-1333
www.autoclubgroup.com/mnia

National Automobile Club
1151 East Hillsdale Boulevard
Foster City, CA 94404
(650) 294-7000
www.nationalautoclub.com



For more information about driver's licenses, contact the Driver and Vehicle Services Division of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety at: **(651) 296-6911** or visit their website at www.dps.state.mn.us/dvs.

For help with consumer problems, you may contact the Minnesota Attorney General's Office as follows:

Office of Minnesota Attorney General

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