

## Motor Vehicle Registry Information Bulletin

# G7 – Information for Interstate and Overseas Visitors to the Northern Territory

## Visitors to the Northern Territory

This information bulletin provides general information to interstate and overseas visitors in regards to the licensing requirements to drive a motor vehicle in the Northern Territory and what rules apply to driving an interstate and or overseas registered motor vehicle.

A drivers licence or motor vehicle registration issued interstate or overseas is only valid as long as the person and or vehicle are classed a visitor to the Northern Territory. NT Legislation is quite specific as to who is a visitor and what is classed as a visiting motor vehicle.

### IMPORTANT

This Information Bulletin should not be considered or relied upon or used as a reference to a point of law, you are advised to seek independent legal advice in regards your specific individual situation.

## Can I use my Interstate/Overseas Driver Licence to drive in the Northern Territory?

Yes – you may use your Interstate/Overseas Driver Licence providing that you have not been in the Northern Territory for a continuous period of three (3) months.

An **interstate** driver licence is valid for up to three (3) months in the NT. So once you have been in the NT for three (3) months, your driver licence becomes invalid. To continue to drive in the NT after this initial three (3) month period, you must be issued a Northern Territory driver licence (in certain circumstances an Exemption from holding an NT driver licence may be granted).

Australian Licence holders are encouraged to transfer their driver licence. There are nil fees for transferring a valid Australian Driver licence to the NT

An **overseas** visitor is permitted to drive in the NT using his/her current overseas licence, together with an overseas issued International Driving Permit granted in accordance with the terms of the 1949 United Nations Convention on Road Traffic, (if the licence is in any language other than English). After three (3) months, the driver licence is invalid. To continue to drive in the NT after this initial three (3) month period, you must be issued a Northern Territory driver licence (in certain circumstances an Exemption from holding an NT driver licence may be granted).

Fees and conditions apply for the granting of a Northern Territory Driver licence.

## What conditions apply?

Any conditions or restrictions imposed on your interstate or overseas driver licence must be adhered to at all times. Failure to comply with any conditions imposed on you licence, such as speed restriction, supervision requirements and or zero alcohol etc will render the licence invalid.

Some interstate and or overseas licences, authorisations, endorsements are not recognised in the NT. For example, a person authorised to drive a taxi interstate, or overseas, cannot drive a taxi in the Northern Territory unless a Northern Territory Taxi Drivers Authorisation is issued (Refer Information Bulletin CPV18 – Commercial Passenger Vehicle Identity Card Requirements). Some driver licences also identify an operator's authorisation/endorsement, for example a Fork Lift or Crane Operator. Holders of an operator's authorisation/endorsement are advised to make appropriate inquiries with either their employer or relevant authority (Work Safe) if their interstate or overseas licence is to be used for any employment related purposes.

This information bulletin is to provide general advice in relation to interstate or overseas visitors who intend to drive a standard passenger vehicle or light truck in the NT for personal use.

## What you should carry with you while driving?

It is an offence in the NT to drive a vehicle without carrying your driver licence at all times. Penalties apply if you can not show your licence to a Police Officer when required. **Overseas Visitors** should also carry their International Driving Permit at all times whilst driving.

## Can I drive my Interstate registered Motor Vehicle in the Northern Territory?

Yes – you may drive your interstate registered motor vehicle in the NT, providing that the vehicle is deemed to be a "visiting motor vehicle". A "visiting motor vehicle" means a motor vehicle described in Section 3 of the *NT Traffic Act* – an extract of which is provided below:

Section 33 - Driving Unregistered Vehicle: sub regulation (1) states, *A person shall not drive; or employ, permit or suffer a person to drive, on a public street or public place a motor vehicle which is not registered.*

Subject to sub regulation (1)

- A visiting motor vehicle requires a policy of insurance complying with the provisions of a law in force in a State or another Territory of the Commonwealth requiring the owner, or driver, of a motor vehicle to be insured against liability in respect of the death of, or bodily injury to, a person caused by, or arising out of, the use of the motor vehicle; and
- A person shall not drive a visiting motor vehicle on a public street, or public place, unless that person complies with the conditions, restrictions, or limitations (if any) imposed in respect of its registration in the State or Territory of the Commonwealth, where it is registered, and:
  - that person can establish, to the satisfaction of the Registrar, that within the period of three (3) months immediately preceding that day, it had been outside the Territory; or
  - the vehicle is, under section 8A(1) of the *Motor Vehicles Act*, exempted from the requirements for registration.
- A vehicle which is registered in another State or Territory of the Commonwealth; must have affixed a current registration label, and number plates required to be affixed by the law of that State or Territory.

A motor vehicle is to be deemed to be not registered, notwithstanding that it is registered under a law of another a State or Territory of the Commonwealth relating to the registration of motor vehicles, where it is being driven in contravention of a condition, restriction or limitation imposed in respect of its registration in that State or Territory.

## Can I drive my Overseas registered Motor Vehicle in the Northern Territory?

Yes – you may drive your overseas registered motor vehicle in the NT, providing that the vehicle is deemed a "visiting motor vehicle". A "visiting motor vehicle" means a motor vehicle under Section 3 of the *NT Traffic Act*, but the following conditions apply

- the vehicle must be, and remain, registered in another country for the duration of its stay in the NT; and
- have affixed a current registration label, and number plates required to be affixed by the law of that country; and
- is temporarily in the Northern Territory; and
- there is in force a policy of insurance issued within Australia, complying with the provisions of a law in force in a State or Territory of the Commonwealth requiring the owner or driver of a motor vehicle to be insured against liability in respect of the death of, or bodily injury to, a person caused by, or arising out of, the use of the motor vehicle; and
- If the vehicle first entered Australia in the NT, it must be inspected at a NT Government Inspection Test Shed for compliance with NT roadworthy requirements, fee's apply; and
- The owner of the vehicle must supply a copy of the CARNET associated with the importation of that vehicle.

See [Information Bulletin V48 – Imported Vehicles](#) for the requirements for temporary imports, special types of imports, and other imports such as Status of Armed Forces (SOFA) and diplomatic vehicles.

Overseas registered vehicles must be presented to a Motor Vehicle Registry – Vehicle Compliance Centre for a roadworthy inspection, registration and document checks, on entry (or soon as practicable afterwards) to the Northern Territory. See [Information Bulletin G05 – Motor Vehicle Registry Service Centres](#).

Where applicable, the following supporting documents (or certified copies of) should also accompany the application:

- Current Visa issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Provide a current Certificate of Registration from the country where the vehicle is registered, in the name of the applicant, for the vehicle.
- Provide a copy of CARNET or Federal Office of Road Safety import approval, and any other customs document.

If there is a genuine reason why the vehicle will remain in the NT longer than the allowable three (3) month visitor vehicle status, you will need to apply for and be issued NT motor vehicle registration or you may apply for an Exemption from obtaining NT registration.

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

#### **Motor Accident Compensation Insurance (Third Party Insurance) is compulsory in the NT.**

You will need to provide proof of current Third Party (or equivalent) insurance issued in Australia (if applicable). If unavailable, you will be required to pay a Compulsory Third Party Insurance contribution to the NT insurance provider – Territory Insurance Office – through Motor Vehicle Registry.

## Other rules which apply to Interstate registered vehicles when driven by NT Residents

A motor vehicle registered in another jurisdiction may be deemed to be not registered, regardless of whether or not it has current registration in another jurisdiction, if:

- You, as the owner are a resident of the NT, and the vehicle has been in the NT continuously for 28 days from the date of the vehicle arriving in the NT;
- You are a resident of the NT, and you purchase an interstate registered vehicle which has been in the NT continuously for 28 days;
- You drive a vehicle registered interstate that has been in the NT for a continuous period of three (3) months (so the vehicle is no longer classed as a “visiting motor vehicle”).

In the first instant an interstate registered vehicle must be registered in the NT if it is to remain in the NT for any period over three (3) months.

If there is a genuine reason why the vehicle will remain in the NT longer than the periods described above, but will be relocating interstate, you may apply for an Exemption from obtaining NT registration.

## Visiting for longer than three (3) months?

The Northern Territory *Traffic Act* requires that a person who intends to be in the NT for longer than three (3) months to apply for an NT Drivers Licence or Vehicle Registration. The other option is to apply for an Instrument of Exemption (under Section 8A of the *Motor Vehicles Act*) from the requirement to hold an NT Driver licence, or to transfer a Vehicle Registration to the NT.

Instruments of Exemption are not provided as a matter of course, and are assessed on a case-by-case basis, on application to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles.

An Instrument of Exemption will only be considered if:

- The applicant can meet all the requirements for a Northern Territory driver licence had they applied for a licence
- The applicant and vehicle can meet all of the requirements to register a motor vehicle in the Northern territory had they applied for registration

## What about Traffic Infringements and Demerit Points?

All Interstate/Overseas drivers are required to obey the Australian Road Rules which have been made law under the Northern Territory (NT) *Traffic Act* and *Regulations*. A Traffic Infringement Notice Scheme is in operation for certain road rule offences. This scheme is mainly enforced by NT Police and Transport Inspectors where notices are either handed to the offending driver or where only the vehicle is identified, they are sent to the registered owner or Nominated Operator.

The NT maintains a Demerit Points Scheme (DPS) based on similar DPS's that already operate in all other Australian states and territories. Interstate/Overseas drivers that receive demerit points will have their offence details and points history recorded by the Motor Vehicle Registry. Interstate drivers will also have their demerit point offences sent to their home state or territory. Demerit point offences are only ever recorded by the MVR once the infringement notice has been finalised.

Interstate/Overseas drivers that exceed the NT's demerit point action trigger for their licence class may have their driving privileges in the NT withdrawn. For details on the NT DPS see [Information Bulletin L28 – NT DPS and how it affects you.](#)

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