



Key Message

States can support service members and their families by allowing them to remotely renew driver's licenses, vehicle registrations and state identifications when service members are serving out of state. This gives military families administrative flexibility while transitioning among duty assignments.

Analysis

States can assist service members and their families by allowing for remote renewals of driver's licenses, vehicle registration and state identification. Allowing remote driver's license renewals aligns with modern expectations for convenience and efficiency while providing substantial benefits such as cost savings, public health and environmental impact. States can leverage technological advancements to implement secure and user-friendly remote renewal systems, ultimately enhancing the overall experience for service members and their families.

Best Practices

1. Montana: Military driver's license exemption

An active-duty service member may apply for a military driver's license exemption. This exemption renders your license valid up to 90 days post honorable discharge, regardless of the expiration date printed on the license. There will be a code added to your license and driving record to indicate a military exempt status. Family members who are stationed with service members are not eligible for a license expiration exemption; however, they are eligible for up to two consecutive mail-in renewals or license replacements by mail.

EXAMPLE:

Montana Code Annotated 2023, Title 31, Chapter 5, Part 1

https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0610/chapter_0050/part_0010/section_0040/0610-0050-0010-0040.html

"61-5-104. Exemptions. (1) The following persons are exempt from licensure under this chapter:

- (a) a person who is a member of the armed forces of the United States while operating a motor vehicle owned by or leased to the United States government and being operated on official business;
- (b) a person who is a member of the armed forces of the United States on active duty in Montana who holds a valid license issued by another state and the spouse of the person who holds a valid license issued by another state;
- (c) a person on active duty in the armed forces of the United States and in immediate possession of a valid license issued to that person in a foreign country by the armed forces of the United States, for a period of 45 days from the date of the person's return to the United States; [...]



- (5)(a) A driver's license issued under this chapter to a person who enters the United States armed forces, if valid and in effect at the time that the person enters the service, continues in effect so long as the service continues, unless the license is suspended, revoked, or canceled for a cause as provided by law, and for up to 90 days following the date on which the licensee is honorably separated from the service.
- (b) A person serving in the United States armed forces may renew the person's driver's license at any point of the person's service, and any renewed license continues in effect as long as the service continues, unless the license is suspended, revoked, or canceled for a cause as provided by law.
- (c) A person serving in the United States armed forces may apply for a Montana driver's license upon meeting the requirements in 61-5-103, and this license continues in effect as long as the service continues, unless the license is suspended, revoked, or canceled for a cause as provided by law, and for up to 90 days following the date on which the licensee is honorably separated from the service."

2. Idaho: Military driver license extensions

Active-duty U.S. military personnel, or members of their immediate family, upon providing active-duty orders, may be granted extensions valid for up to four years. They are allowed to be issued multiple extensions but not to exceed their active-duty status period. Military extensions expire 60 days from date of discharge/separation/retirement from active duty or the expiration date on the extension card, whichever occurs first.

EXAMPLE:

Idaho Statutes, Title 49, Chapter 3

<https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/Title49/T49CH3/SECT49-319/>

49-319. "(9) An Idaho driver's license issued to any person prior to serving on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, or a member of the immediate family accompanying such a person, if valid and in full force and effect upon entering active duty, shall remain in full force and effect and shall, upon application, be extended for a period of four (4) years as long as active duty continues or shall be renewed upon application in person without the requirement to take a knowledge or skills test if the Idaho driver's license expired while on active duty, if the driver's license is not suspended, denied, disqualified, canceled or revoked, as provided by law, during the active duty, and the driver's license shall remain in full force and effect sixty (60) days following the date the holder is released from active duty."



3. Indiana: Military provision for vehicle registration

EXAMPLE:

Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Easy Plate Renewal

<https://www.in.gov/bmv/resources/military-families/>

“Indiana military personnel living out of the state may either obtain registration in their new state of residence or renew their vehicle registrations through the Indiana BMV.

If you live out of state, but would like to renew your registration in Indiana, you may have the BMV send your registration renewal notice and your renewed material to your home address or to the address of a friend or family member who can send the materials to your current location. You will need to have a valid mail-forwarding order with your local post office so your material will reach your current address or ensure the BMV has your friend or family member’s address on record.

If you are a member of the military from another state who is stationed in Indiana, you may title and register your vehicle in Indiana. [...]”