

MONTEREY INSTITUTE

MONTEREY INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

An affiliate of Middlebury College

AUTOMOBILE & DRIVER'S LICENSE INFORMATION

DRIVER'S LICENSE

All resident drivers of California are required to have a valid California Driver's License within ten days of establishing residency, which for students is the date you rent an apartment or take a job (including on-campus work-study positions). International driver's licenses are not recognized in California after the first ten days of residency, and international students must follow the same procedures if they plan to drive in the state. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) handles all paperwork and licensing for vehicles:

NOTE: International students who want a California I.D. must apply for it as soon as possible. The process takes up to 6 months. If you don't have a U.S. driver's license, you will need a California State photo I.D. as identification. It is useful to have one when writing a check, for example, **unless you want to carry your passport around, which is NOT recommended.**

DMV Office: 1180 Canyon Del Rey Blvd., Seaside
For General Information and Appointments: 1-(800) 777-0133 or 1-(800) 921-1117
For more information and Hours of Operation: <http://www.dmv.ca.gov>

Although an appointment is not required, it is strongly recommended. Without one, you may face long lines and the chance of not completing the process in one day. You will be required to show proof of your birth date (a passport w/I94, Social Security #, birth certificate or validated copy of it--state, city or county issued), and proof of legal presence (I20, INS documents or Certificate of Nationality. International students may also obtain a REQUIRED letter of application for a Social Security number by applying for a CA Driver's License. The fee for a driver's license is \$25; for a photo ID only, \$21. You may pick up a copy of a "Driver's Handbook" at the DMV office in Seaside, or call the number shown above to have one mailed to you and/or to receive additional information.

Moped, scooter and other drivers of two-wheeled motor-driven cycles: According to California law, you must obtain a Class M license to drive on public streets. The same process as above should be followed; the fee is \$24. Non-motorized bicycle drivers do not need a license but are subject to the same traffic laws as licensed drivers.

VEHICLES PREVIOUSLY REGISTERED IN ANOTHER STATE

The rules on registering an out-of-state car in California vary according to certain exceptions; car ownership, amount of time spent each year in state where car is registered, etc.

- If you are driving your parents', a sibling's or a friend's car and it is registered outside of California, you need not change the car's registration. Or, if the car is registered in your name, but you can make a good case that it is in another state for some extended part of the year (such as a summer vacation), you can also maintain your other-state registration.
- If your car is currently registered in another state is registered in your name and is located in California most of the year, it must be registered in California within 20 days after you become a California resident.

For further information on the law and its exceptions, or to receive the necessary forms for the registration process, call the DMV or check at <http://www.dmv.ca.gov>. You will be required to show the previous registration card when you register the car at the DMV.

SMOG CHECK CERTIFICATE

Under the California Smog Check Program, most cars and light trucks registered in California must be inspected every other year. Inspection is also required when a vehicle is first registered in the state or when it changes ownership. If buying a used car, the seller is responsible for delivering to the buyer a current smog certificate on the vehicle to be purchased.

All mechanics qualified to participate in the Smog Check Program have passed a State of California training course. Look under "Automobile Smog Control Devices" in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory for official smog stations, or check with the Student Affairs Office for additional information.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

If you are stopped by a police officer and cited for a traffic violation, you must show proof of your insurance coverage. If you do not have proof, you will be cited. You must carry some evidence of insurance coverage showing the name of your insurance company, policy or bond number and dates of coverage. Failure to keep coverage in effect can result in a court fine, driver's license suspension for one year, and the requirement that you file proof of financial responsibility with this department for a period of three years following the suspension. Some insurance carriers offer "Good Student Discounts." We suggest that you obtain at least three quotes before purchasing insurance, as rates may vary a great deal.

SEAT BELT REGULATIONS

California law requires drivers and passengers to use safety belts when they ride in a passenger vehicle on California roadways. If you or a previous owner removed the safety belts, you may still be cited for failure to comply with the law. The driver will be cited if he/she does not have the seat belt fastened, and may also be cited for any passenger who is not using a seat belt. If an unbelted passenger is 16 years of age or older, that passenger will receive a citation. To protect yourself and your friends, buckle up--it's a good law.

DRINKING AND DRIVING. "IF YOU DRINK, DON'T DRIVE!!!"

Just a few drinks could make you an unsafe driver. It is illegal:

- for anyone with a blood alcohol level of .08 percent or higher to drive a vehicle on a public roadway.
- to drink any alcoholic beverage in a motor vehicle upon a public roadway.
- have an opened container holding **any** amount of alcoholic beverage in a vehicle on a roadway unless the container is kept out of the immediate control of the occupants (i.e., in the trunk).

For a person of average weight, it takes only one drink within one hour to reach the .08 percent illegal blood alcohol concentration level. *Note: it is even possible to be convicted of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) with as little as .01 percent Blood Alcohol Content (BAC). Remember "one drink" is a 12-ounce beer, or a 4-ounce glass of wine, or 1 1/4-ounce shot of 80-proof liquor (even if mixed with non-alcoholic drinks).* If you have larger or stronger drinks, drink on an empty stomach, are tired, sick, upset, or have taken medicines or drugs, you can be unsafe with just one drink. The penalties for a **first-offense** of DUI (Driving Under the Influence) or DWI (Driving While Intoxicated) are severe in California.

AUTO REPAIRS

If you need car repairs and do not have a mechanic, check with the Student Affairs Office for recommendations. Should you have questions or any problems with regard to repairs to your car and are considering filing a complaint, contact the California Bureau of Automotive Repair (1-800-952-5210) or the nearest district office in San Jose at (408-277-1860). You may also file an official complaint with the Better Business Bureau.

EMERGENCY ROAD SERVICE ON THE PENINSULA

AAA (*members Only)
Monterey Garage

1-800-222-4357
831-375-4175