



## *Expired Stateside Driver's License*

Unfortunately, many Servicemembers, DOD civilians, and dependents allow their driver's license to expire when they go overseas.

The decision not to renew your driver's license can cause problems in a number of ways. One way in which this can cause a problem is that the next time you need to rent a car in the States, you may be declined if you do not have a driver's license from your home state. Your SOFA license should not be, and usually will not be, accepted by the car rental company because it is not a state-issued license. In addition, even if you can find a car rental company that will rent a car to you based on your SOFA license, if you should have an accident, you could very well be charged with driving with-

out a license if you do not have a valid state-issued driver's license.

The idea of getting an international driver's license is not the answer, either. First of all, an international driver's license is supposed to only be a translation of your state-issued license. And secondly, an international driver's license is not valid in the States.

Practice good preventive law – renew your driver's license when time comes for renewal. And if it has expired, do whatever is necessary to renew it without further delay. Many states will allow you to renew a license Online, even if it has expired, but only within a set period of time. Contact your state for the particular requirements.

## *IRS Notice?*

Did you receive a notice from the IRS this year? Every year the IRS sends millions of letters and notices to taxpayers, but that doesn't mean you need to worry. Here are eight things every taxpayer should keep in mind about IRS notices – just in case one shows up in your mailbox.

1. Don't panic. Many of these letters can be dealt with simply and painlessly.
2. There are number of reasons the IRS sends notices to taxpayers. The notice may request payment of taxes, notify you of a change to your account or request additional information. The notice you receive normally covers a very specific issue about your account or tax return.
3. Each letter and notice offers specific instructions on what you need to do to satisfy the inquiry.
4. If you receive a correction notice, you should review the correspondence and compare it with the information on your return.

5. If you agree with the correction to your account, usually no reply is necessary unless a payment is due.
6. If you do not agree with the correction the IRS made, it is important that you respond as requested. Write to explain why you disagree. Include any documents and information you wish the IRS to consider, along with the bottom tear-off portion of the notice. Mail the information to the IRS address shown in the upper left-hand corner of the notice. Allow at least 30 days for a response.
7. Most correspondence can be handled without calling or visiting an IRS office. However, if you have questions, call the telephone number in the upper right-hand corner of the notice. Have a copy of your tax return and the correspondence available when you call in order to help them respond to your inquiry.
8. It's important that you keep copies of any correspondence with your records.

Office of the Staff Judge Advocate  
USARJ  
Unit 45005 APO, AP 96343-5005  
DSN: 315 263-4698  
Commercial: 81-46-407-4698

## *Education Tax Savings: 529 vs. Coverdell*

There are a variety of tax credits, deductions, and savings plans available to taxpayers to assist with the payment of education expenses. The 529 and Coverdell savings plans allow for tax free accumulation of interest, tax free distribution of principal, or both. The primary similarities and differences are outlined below for ease of comparison.

### WE'RE ON THE WEB

[HTTP://  
WWW.USARJ.ARMY.MIL/  
CMDSTFFS/SJA/  
LA0.ASPX](http://www.usarj.army.mil/cmdstffs/sja/la0.aspx)

PROUD TO  
SERVE  
AMERICA'S  
FINEST MEN  
AND WOMEN

### 529

1. Contributions are not deductible.
2. No income limitation for contribution.
3. Distributions are tax free so long as it is used for qualified HIGHER education expenses: Tuition, books, supplies, equipment, room and board, computer technology, and internet.

### COVERDELL

1. Contributions are not deductible.
2. Income limitation and \$2K Max contribution.
3. Distributions are tax free so long as they are less than a beneficiary's qualified education expenses. Elementary, Secondary, and Higher education expenses including tuition, fees, books, equipment, and room/board.

## *Importance of a Will*

When getting a Will, there are three primary documents that should be prepared to express how you wish to distribute your assets in the event of your death, and your wishes as to how you want your healthcare and burial handled.

The first document is the will itself. In this, you explain how you want your assets to be distributed upon your death, to whom, and identify your personal representative (or executor). You can also appoint a guardian for your minor children, as well as set up a testamentary trust for them so that some or all of your assets can be held in safekeeping for them. A will can also contain provisions for what you want done with your body after you die – from burial in a specific location, to cremation, to what kind of funeral you would like to have.

The second document is a living will, in which you formally express your wishes to your treating physician, family, and others, that you do not want to be kept artificially alive or on life support if you are injured or become terminally ill and are in a persistent vegetative state with no possible hope of recovery.

The third document is a medical power of attorney, in which you appoint someone to make healthcare decisions for you in the event you are incapacitated or unconscious and unable to make those decisions yourself. These decisions can include whether your organs are to be donated upon your death and whether you want to be allowed to pass away at home or in a hospital.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact the Legal Assistance Office at 263-4698.

