

INTER-AMERICAN AUTOMOTIVE TRAFFIC

*Convention opened for signature at the Pan American Union December 15, 1943, and signed for the United States December 31, 1943
Senate advice and consent to ratification, with an understanding and a reservation, July 25, 1946¹*

Ratified by the President of the United States, with an understanding and a reservation, August 8, 1946¹

Ratification of the United States deposited with the Pan American Union October 29, 1946

Entered into force July 25, 1944;² for the United States October 29, 1946

Proclaimed by the President of the United States November 1, 1946

Replaced by convention of September 19, 1949,³ as between contracting parties to the later convention

61 Stat. 1129; Treaties and Other
International Acts Series 1567

CONVENTION ON THE REGULATION OF INTER-AMERICAN AUTOMOTIVE TRAFFIC

The Governments of the American Republics, desirous of establishing uniform rules among themselves to control and regulate international automotive traffic on their highways, and to facilitate the movement of motor vehicles among such States,

Have decided to conclude the present Convention in order to effectuate the foregoing purposes, and have agreed upon the following articles:

ARTICLE I

It is recognized that each State has exclusive jurisdiction over the use of its own highways, but agrees to their international use as specified in this Convention.

¹ For text of U.S. understanding and reservation, made at time of signing and maintained in the Senate's resolution of advice and consent and in the President's ratification, see p. 875.

² Date of deposit of second instrument of ratification.

³ 3 UST 3008; TIAS 2487.

ARTICLE II

Under the terms of the present Convention, a motor vehicle shall be defined as any self-propelled vehicle circulating upon a public highway without the need of rails and used for the transport of persons or merchandise.

A highway shall be defined as any public way maintained for and open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel.

An operator shall be defined as any person who drives or is in actual physical control of a motor vehicle upon a highway.

ARTICLE III

The operator of a motor vehicle circulating in any State which is a party to this Convention is subject to the traffic laws and regulations in force in that State or subdivision thereof.

A copy of such laws and regulations may be handed to the operator at the time of entering each State, by the customs authorities who are clearing the vehicle for entry, or by any authorized agency.

ARTICLE IV

The Contracting States shall not allow customs measures to be put into effect which will hinder international travel.

Simplified customs and other regulatory measures which have been or may be put into effect by any contiguous States parties to this Convention, for the facilitation of international automotive traffic, shall be considered to be in furtherance of this Convention and shall be encouraged.

ARTICLE V

Before admission to international traffic, every vehicle shall be registered by the State of origin in the manner prescribed by its laws, or by any subdivision thereof having legal authority to register vehicles.

ARTICLE VI

Every motor vehicle operator before admission to international traffic shall have such driving license as may be required by the laws of his State or such as may be issued by any political subdivision thereof having legal authority to issue driving licenses. In the event that no such driving license is required by his State or any political subdivision thereof, a special international driving license such as is specified in Article XIII shall be valid. No operator shall be admitted to international travel who is less than 18 years of age.

ARTICLE VII

Evidence of compliance with the conditions of this Convention shall entitle motor vehicles and motor vehicle operators to circulate on the highways of any of the Contracting States.

ARTICLE VIII

Each State or its political subdivisions shall maintain central bureaus of registration with facilities for the exchange of information with other States as to registration of vehicles and operators.

ARTICLE IX

In addition to the registration plate or plates of the State of origin or of its legally empowered political subdivisions each vehicle shall display an international registration marker indicating the country of origin. This marker shall be in the form of an oval plate not less than 3 inches (8 cm.) wide by 10 inches (26 cm.) long bearing capital Latin letters painted black on a white background.

The distinctive names or letters indicating the several countries shall be the following:

Argentina	ARGENTINA	Haiti	HAITI
Bolivia	BOLIVIA	Honduras	HONDURAS
Brazil	BRASIL	Mexico	MEXICO
Chile	CHILE	Nicaragua	NICARAGUA
Colombia	COLOMBIA	Panama	PANAMA
Costa Rica	COSTA RICA	Paraguay	PARAGUAY
Cuba	CUBA	Peru	PERU
Dominican Republic.....	REP. DOM.	United States of America.....	U.S.A.
Ecuador	ECUADOR	Uruguay	URUGUAY
El Salvador.....	SALVADOR	Venezuela	VENEZUELA
Guatemala	GUATEMALA		

This distinctive plate shall be issued by the State or its authorized representatives.

All registration plates shall be plainly visible.

Motor vehicles bearing the international registration markers provided for by the International Convention for the Circulation of Automobiles, 1909, as amended in 1926,⁴ shall be recognized as having complied with the foregoing conditions concerning international registration markers.

For admission to international travel, each motor vehicle shall bear in a readily accessible location the name of the manufacturer of the vehicle, the manufacturer's number of the chassis, and the manufacturer's number of the engine.

ARTICLE X

Unless otherwise provided by the laws or regulations of the respective States or subdivisions thereof, the size of vehicles and loads shall be limited to the following:

1. No vehicle shall exceed a total outside width, including any load thereon, of 8 feet (2.44 meters).

⁴ 108 LNTS 123. The United States did not become a party.

2. No vehicle with or without load shall exceed a maximum height of 12 feet, 6 inches (3.80 meters).

3. No vehicle shall exceed an over-all length of 35 feet (10.70 meters) and no combination of vehicles coupled together shall exceed a total length of 45 feet (13.75 meters).

4. No vehicle shall carry any load extending more than 3 feet (91 centimeters) beyond the front thereof.

5. No passenger vehicle shall carry any load extending beyond the line of the fenders on the left side nor extending more than 6 inches (15.2 centimeters) beyond the line of fenders on the right side thereof; provided however that in States in which the left hand drive is compulsory the provisions of this paragraph referring to the side of loads shall be reversed.

6. Special permits for vehicles or combinations of vehicles exceeding these limits may be issued by the competent authorities of the States.

ARTICLE XI

Unless the laws and regulations of the respective States or political subdivisions thereof provide otherwise, the following requirements as to equipment shall be indispensable for motor vehicles admitted to international traffic:

1. Every motor vehicle shall have brakes adequate to control the movement of and to stop and hold such vehicle. The brakes shall be capable of stopping the vehicle on a dry, smooth, level road within a distance of 30 feet (9 meters) when travelling at a speed of 20 miles (32 kilometers) per hour.

2. Every motor vehicle shall have a suitable horn or other warning device satisfactory to the regulatory authorities.

3. Every motor vehicle other than a motorcycle shall be equipped with two head lamps, at the front of and on opposite sides of the vehicle, which shall at night, under normal atmospheric conditions and on a level road, produce light sufficient to render clearly discernible a person not less than 350 feet (107 meters) ahead and shall be capable of operation so as not to project a glaring or dazzling light. Every motorcycle shall have at least one head lamp.

4. Every motor vehicle, and every trailer or semi-trailer which is being drawn at the end of a train of vehicles, shall carry at the rear a lamp which exhibits a red light plainly visible at night under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of 500 feet (152 meters) to the rear of such vehicle. The registration plate carried on the rear of such vehicle shall under like conditions be so illuminated by a white light as to be read from a distance of 50 feet (15 meters) to the rear of the vehicle.

5. Every motor vehicle shall have a muffler in good working order and in constant operation to prevent excessive or unusual noise.

6. Every motor vehicle which is so constructed or loaded as to obstruct the driver's view to the rear thereof from the operator's position shall be equipped with a mirror so located as to reflect to the driver a view of the highway for a distance of at least 200 feet (70 meters) to the rear of such vehicle.

7. Every motor vehicle other than a motorcycle shall have a windshield wiper in good working order.

ARTICLE XII

A special international automobile certificate, in addition to the registration required by Article V, may be required for each motor vehicle for admission to and circulation in any individual State party to this Convention, if the State so elects. Provision for the issuance of such certificate shall be made by each Contracting State, and such document shall be issued by the State, or by any authorized political subdivision thereof, or by an association duly empowered by such authorities, or by an authorized representative of either the Contracting State or of one of its political subdivisions, having legal authority to issue such certificates. The validity of such special international automobile certificate shall be recognized by all officials having jurisdiction over matters involving legal ownership of the vehicle. The certificate shall be in the form, of the size, and contain the information prescribed in Annex A to this Convention, and shall be valid for one year from date of issuance.

The international automobile certificate issued in accordance with the International Convention of 1926 on Automobile Circulation shall be deemed to meet the requirements of this Article.

ARTICLE XIII

A special international driving license may be required for each operator admitted to circulation in any individual State party to this Convention, if the State so elects. Such a special license shall be required for each operator who does not possess a domestic driving license as required in Article VI. Provision for the issuance of such international driving license shall be made by each Contracting State, and such document shall be issued by the State, or by any authorized political subdivision thereof, or by an association duly empowered by such authorities, or by an authorized representative of either the Contracting State or one of its political subdivisions having legal authority to issue driving licenses. The validity of such special international driving license shall be recognized by all officials having regulatory powers over automotive traffic. The license shall be in the form, of the size, and contain the information prescribed in Annex B to this Convention, and shall be valid for one year from date of issuance.

The international driving license issued in accordance with the International Convention of 1926 shall be deemed to meet the requirements of this Article.

ARTICLE XIV

A general bond guaranteeing payment of customs charges on any motor vehicle to be admitted to international traffic, due and payable within the country in which such charges may be incurred, may be required by any State party to this Convention.

The international customs pass (carnet de passage en douane) of the Association Internationale des Automobile Clubs Reconnus or of the Alliance Internationale de Tourisme shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of this Article for any Contracting State in which a bond is required.

No bond shall be required in any Contracting State if the stay of the foreign vehicle therein does not exceed the period allowed for free stay.

ARTICLE XV

Each State may establish such requirements as it may deem necessary to record the passage into and out of its territory, of vehicles and operators admitted to international traffic. If such records are maintained, they shall include a notation that the vehicle has complied with the provisions of Articles X and XI.

ARTICLE XVI

The hours and routes dedicated to the crossing of frontiers by properly registered vehicles shall be fixed by common consent of the adjacent States and their decisions communicated to the corresponding custom authorities.

ARTICLE XVII

Infractions of this Convention shall be punished in conformity with the laws and regulations of the country in which committed.

Infractions which shall have incurred judicial penalty shall be communicated by the judge or magistrate to the proper authorities, who in turn shall communicate them to the authorities of the State or its political subdivision in which the vehicle and its owner or operator were originally registered.

ARTICLE XVIII

Any vehicle or operator admitted to international traffic under the provisions of the International Convention for the Circulation of Automobiles,

1909, as amended in 1926, and holding the documents required thereunder, will be recognized as fulfilling the requirements of the present Convention.

ARTICLE XIX

The original of the present Convention in Spanish, English, Portuguese, and French shall be deposited with the Pan American Union and opened for signature by the American republics. The Convention shall also be opened for the adherence and accession of American States which are not members of the Pan American Union. The Pan American Union shall transmit authentic certified copies to the Governments for the purpose of ratification.

ARTICLE XX

The present Convention shall be ratified by the High Contracting Parties in conformity with their respective constitutional procedures. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited in the archives of the Pan American Union in Washington, which shall notify the signatory Governments of said deposit. Such notification shall be considered as an exchange of ratifications.

ARTICLE XXI

The present Convention shall come into force between the High Contracting Parties in the order in which they deposit their respective ratifications.

ARTICLE XXII

The present Convention shall remain in effect indefinitely, but may be denounced by means of one year's notice given to the Pan American Union, which shall transmit it to the other signatory Governments. After the expiration of this period the Convention shall cease in its effects as regards the party which denounces it, but shall remain in effect for the remaining High Contracting Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned Plenipotentiaries, having deposited their full powers found to be in due and proper form, sign this Convention in Spanish, English, Portuguese, and French, at the Pan American Union, Washington, D.C., on behalf of their respective Governments and affix thereto their seals on the dates appearing opposite their signatures.

ANNEX A

INTERNATIONAL AUTOMOBILE CERTIFICATE

(Name of country)

*International
Automobile
Certificate*

(Size of form when printed : 5¼" x 3¾")

The validity of this certificate shall be recognized by all officials having regulatory powers over the registration of motor vehicles in the following countries, with the exception of the country in which issued :

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| Argentina | Honduras |
| Bolivia | Mexico |
| Brazil | Nicaragua |
| Colombia | Panama |
| Costa Rica | Paraguay |
| Cuba | Peru |
| Chile | Dominican Republic |
| Ecuador | United States of America |
| El Salvador | Uruguay |
| Guatemala | Venezuela |
| Haiti | |

(Draw lines through names of countries which have not ratified the Convention at time of issue.)

INTERNATIONAL AUTOMOBILE CERTIFICATE

Issued in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic signed at Washington, D.C., U.S.A., in 1943.

Issued by.....
 At.....
 Date.....
 Signature (x).....
 Number.....

(x) Signature of Authority or signature of Association empowered by the Authority, and "visa" of the latter.

Good for one year from date of issue.

Owner or Holder	{	Surname:.....
		Other names:.....
		Home address:.....
Class of vehicle:.....		
Name of maker of chassis:.....		
Type of chassis:.....		
Serial number of type or maker's number of chassis:.....		
Engine.....	{	Number of cylinders:.....
		Engine number:.....
		Stroke:.....
		Bore:.....
Horse power:.....		

Body..... { Type:.....
 { Color:.....
 { Number of seats:.....
 Weight of vehicle without load (in kilos):.....
 Weight of vehicle fully loaded (in kilos) if exceeding 3,500 kilos:.....
 Identification marks on plates:.....

(The entrance visa should contain the following data: country, place, date, signature and seal of the authority granting the visa.)

.....

ANNEX B

INTERNATIONAL DRIVING LICENSE

(Name of country)

*International
 Driving
 License*

(Size of form when printed, 5¼" x 3¾")

The validity of this license shall be recognized by all officials having regulatory powers over automotive traffic in the following countries, with the exception of the country in which issued.

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| Argentina | Honduras |
| Bolivia | Mexico |
| Brazil | Nicaragua |
| Colombia | Panama |
| Costa Rica | Paraguay |
| Cuba | Peru |
| Chile | Dominican Republic |
| Ecuador | United States of America |
| El Salvador | Uruguay |
| Guatemala | Venezuela |
| Haiti | |

(Draw lines through names of countries which have not ratified the Convention at time of issue.)

INTERNATIONAL DRIVING LICENSE

Issued in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic signed at Washington, D.C., U.S.A., in 1943.

Issued by.....
 At.....
 Date.....

Signature (x)
 Number

(x) Signature of Authority or signature of Association empowered by the Authority, and
 "visa" of the latter.

Valid for one year from date of issue.

PARTICULARS CONCERNING THE DRIVER

*Official
 seal*

Photograph

Surname 1
 Other names 2
 Place of birth 3
 Date of birth 4
 Home address 5

(Name of country)

REVOCAATION

M. (surname and other names)
 authorized as above by the authority of (country)
 is deprived of the
 right to drive in (country)
 by reason of
 Place
 Date

(signature)

*Seal of
 Authority*

PARTICULARS CONCERNING THE DRIVER

For the photograph, see above

Surname: 1
 Other names: 2
 Place of birth: 3
 Date of birth: 4
 Home address: 5

(The three categories of driving licenses indicated below—A, B and C—are established in order to permit States or subdivisions thereof which have special requirements differentiating among drivers of light vehicles, heavy vehicles and combinations, and motorcycles, to issue appropriate licenses for each or all of these classes. A separate seal of authority is provided for use in such case or cases.)

A	B	C
Motor vehicles of which the weight with load does not exceed 3,500 kilos.	Motor vehicles of which the weight with load exceeds 3,500 kilos.	Motorcycles with or without side-car.
A	B	C
Seal of Authority	Seal of Authority	Seal of Authority

For Bolivia:
 LUIS F. GUACHALLA *15 December 1943* [SEAL]

For Brazil:
 FERNANDO LOBO *15 December 1943* [SEAL]

For Cuba:
 AURELIO F. CONCHESO *15 December 1943* [SEAL]

For Ecuador:
 C. E. ALFARO *15 December 1943* [SEAL]

For Guatemala:
 ADRIAN RECINOS *15 December 1943* [SEAL]

For Haiti:
 A. LIAUTAUD *15 December 1943* [SEAL]

For Nicaragua:
 GUILLERMO SEVILLA S. *15 December 1943* [SEAL]

For Peru:
 M. DE FREYRE Y S. *15 December 1943* [SEAL]

For the Dominican Republic:

The Plenipotentiary of the Dominican Republic signs the Convention with the following reservation:

That the provision of Article XIV shall not imply that the period of one year mentioned in Article XII refers to the time during which a vehicle may operate in a Contracting State, without having given bond or paying the taxes that its laws require, but rather to the period of validity of the certificate of admission which the State may not require. Also, that this Convention shall not affect the treaties, conventions or other international agreements which the Dominican Republic has concluded or may conclude, nor its immigration laws [translation].

A. COPELLO *15 December 1943* [SEAL]

For the United States of America:

Signed subject to the understanding and reservation that nothing in Article XV shall be construed to require the use of personnel and facilities of the United States of America for the purpose of determining compliance with the provisions of Articles X and XI by vehicles whenever, in the opinion of the competent authorities of the United States of America, there would result an impairment of essential services performed by such personnel and facilities or an undue hindrance to the movement of automotive traffic into and from the territory of the United States of America.

CORDELL HULL *December 31, 1943* [SEAL]

For El Salvador:

HECTOR DAVID CASTRO *6 January 1944* [SEAL]

[The convention was signed for Argentina on June 27, 1947; for Chile, with reservations, on October 27, 1944; for Colombia on September 30, 1949; for Costa Rica on January 20, 1944; for Honduras on April 24, 1944; for Mexico, with reservations, on April 14, 1949; for Panama on July 13, 1944; for Paraguay on February 26, 1947; for Uruguay on October 23, 1953; and for Venezuela on December 7, 1959.]