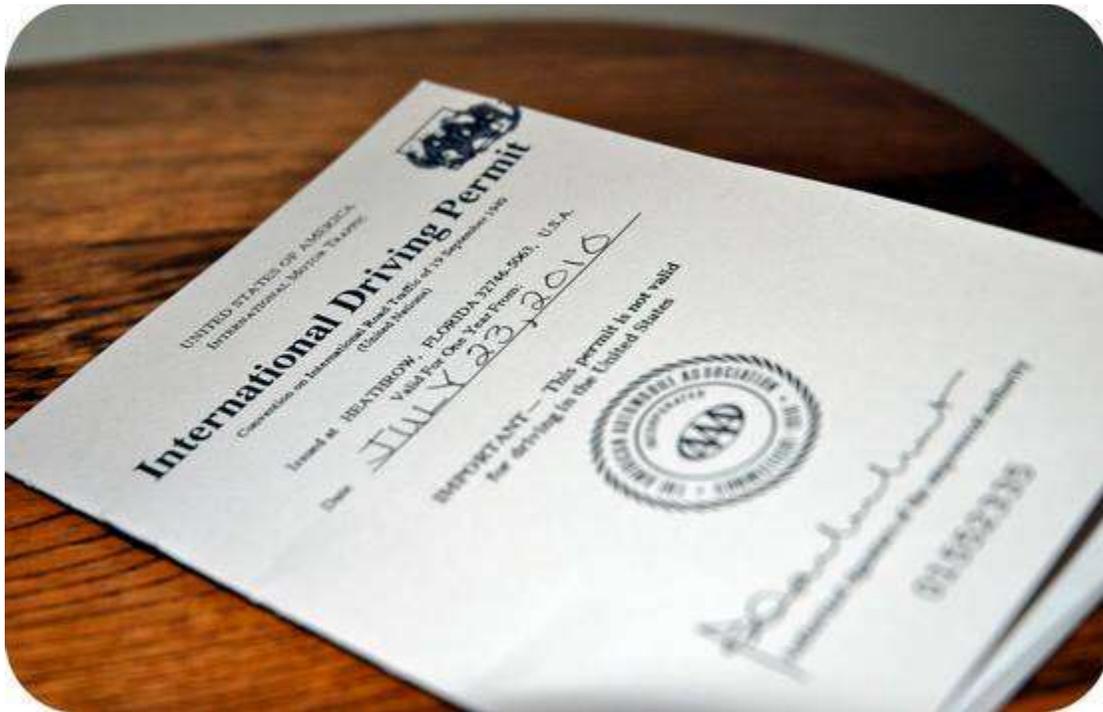


## Bugging out to a Foreign Country

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Today's rant involves bugging out to foreign countries. I have recently held a few serious conversations with several preppers who have developed bug-out plans to leave the continental United States in the event of a major meltdown of the infrastructure. I personally see several downfalls with such an idea as this, however, to each their own, but that is merely my own personal opinion. In the event that you are inclined to leave America during those crisis periods, you would be well served to keep in mind that laws are completely different in foreign countries than they may be here at home.

What is viewed as normal here in the US may not necessarily be customary elsewhere. Even here we see a vast difference in customs, and traditions from state to state. Flashing an incorrect hand signal, or misunderstanding a particular street sign could easily land you in a heap of trouble in a country that you are not familiar with. In some cases, you could even be tossed in the local jail, or fined for these minor infractions. Knowing the laws and customs of the country you plan to bug-out to can save you a lot of embarrassment, and possible legal actions.

One typical example would apply to Germany. When we were stationed in Germany during my military career, we were surprised to find that there was no speed limit posted for driving on the autobahn. To those unfamiliar with this German interstate system, motorists are not limited to 70 or 80 or even 90 miles per hour, but they are treated to an unlimited speed limit. My landlord once took me for a ride with his America made Thunderbird, and the experience was nothing short of amazing. It is not unusual to find automobiles traveling at speed in excess of 130 miles an hour.

Although this unlimited speed limit might be a thrill to many it also poses a hazard to those drivers who break down, or run out of gas on this super highway. One should never, and I repeat never run out

of gasoline when traveling on the autobahn. Since there is no speed limit posted for this highway, we find many miles of open road where drivers literally “put the pedal to the metal”. If you are unlucky enough to run out of gas you can rest assured you will be receiving not only a visit from the local police, but most assuredly a hefty fine as well. These incidents of running out of gas create a dangerous situation for all travelers on the highway. In addition, one should never tailgate, and avoid slow driving in the passing lane. The key is to use common sense.

Another rule that many Americans tend to violate is driving without their headlights on. This policy is slowly gaining a following here in the United States, and I expect that before long it will become standard law. There are stretches of highway in Maryland where you will encounter signs telling you that it is the law to have your headlights on. Strange as it may seem, studies have shown that drivers may be more aware of the traffic around them if automobile headlights are on even in the daytime. In some countries where it is mandatory, you could face a \$100 dollar fine for not following the law.

The last item that I would like to mention is the International Driving Permits. Years ago, I obtained one of these permits which allow a foreigner to drive an automobile in other countries. You can use it in most countries other than your own. Generally, driving is viewed as a luxury in foreign countries, and as in Germany, all motorists must attend an expensive driving class. American driver's licenses are not recognized in foreign countries of Europe, Asia and other areas of the world. International driving permits are fairly simple to obtain and are reasonably priced. These permits are internationally recognized and an accepted identification to indicate that the holder is qualified to operate a motor vehicle. The license includes a photograph of the driver and the classes of vehicles that they may operate whether it is automobiles, motorcycles, or trailers. When using an international driving permit, you should always carry your stateside government issued driver's license.

The permits are not necessary when driving between the United States and Canada, since our American driver's license is valid. Although not necessary for travel to Mexico, the permit often provides a means of translation for your stateside license into the Spanish language. All that is necessary in order to obtain one is to apply through the American Automobile Association (AAA), or through the National Automobile Club (NAC). You will need two color passport photos, a copy of your valid state driver's license, and the payment of \$20 to \$25 dollars.

There you have it. A few hints in the event that you plan to bug-out to a foreign country. I suggest that once you make up your mind as to the country of your choice that you do some further investigation into the laws, and customs associated with that nation. It is always better to be safe than sorry.