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Renew your licenses by Sept. 1 to save money

On Sept. 1, the cost to renew license plates or a driver license in Florida will increase and for most people, it will be more than 50 percent. To save people money, Sarasota County Tax Collector Barbara Ford-Coates encourages all drivers to check their license & registration to see if they can renew before Sept. 1.

“The easiest way to renew is online at www.SarasotaTaxCollector.com,” said Ford-Coates. “Anyone with a license plate renewal due from now thru the end of November can avoid the increase by renewing early.”

Florida law allows Department of Motor Vehicles renewals up to three months prior to the expiration date; therefore, if your vehicle renewal month is November, you can renew starting in August. All renewals before Sept. 1 will be at the lower rate. In addition Ford-Coates noted that “drivers who renew their license plate for two years will be able to save twice as much.” However, if you have already renewed for one year, the state does not allow you to change that to a two-year renewal.

Unlike a license plate renewal, a driver license can be renewed up to 18 months ahead so the Tax Collector also advised “that each of us should check our driver license and if it expires before March 1, 2011, plan to renew before Sept. 1.”

For example if your license expires Feb. 15, 2011 you can renew beginning August 15, 2009. However, remember that you cannot renew until it's no more than 18 months before the expiration date.

New residents or those adding a vehicle should note that the largest increase affects those purchasing a license plate for the first time. On Sept. 1, that fee increases to over \$350 per vehicle.

Renewals for vehicle registration and driver licenses can be completed online at www.SarasotaTaxCollector.com.

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