

Obtaining your Panamanian driver's license

Written by T. Rob Brown (aka Roberto Chocolate)

Saturday, 22 August 2009 17:28 - Last Updated Tuesday, 04 May 2010 18:49

Obtaining a Panamanian driver's license is required after being in Panama for 90 days.

First, go to the **SERTRACEN** office nearest you (or go online at [www.sertracen.com](http://www.sertracen.com.pa) .pa) or call 315 - 0000 to find out what the current requirements are.

NOTE: If you do not have a valid license or yours has expired, go to the office or go online and look for the requirement for an Extranjero Temporal Sin Licencia A, B, C section. Article 110.

Like in Canada and the USA you will need to take an eye exam and pass both a written and a practical driving exam (a driving test in the car). All of this will be done IN Spanish. You will also need a blood test and medical exam showing you are in good health.

It is much easier to renew your licence in your home country and get a new one issued here. Here is how to apply for your Extranjero Temporal Con Licencia A, B, C Article 110:

As of August 2009 you needed to:

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- get an authenticated copy of your (current and valid) driver's license from **your Embassy**. The Canadian Embassy, located in the World Trade Center on Calle 53 Este (a one way going north) just south of Calle 50 They charged \$43 (US\$), and suggested it would take one working day to stamp it. However they were very kind. I got mine in a half-hour when I explained how far away I lived.

- Take this document to The **Ministerio de Relaciones Exterior** is in the Edison Plaza (Look for a tapered, round, white bank building) located at the junction of Tumba Muerto and El Paical (Via Brasil). You need to get the Canadian Embassy's signature authenticated here. NOTE: In this Panamanian government office, no-one spoke English. I brought a Panamanian friend along to help translate.

- Buy two (2) one dollar (\$1.00) stamps from the person standing outside the office to attach to your document. Passports and other documents cost more. Just buy two one dollar stamps.

- line up inside the office in the **Reception de Documento** line-up (white sign, not the green sign) Obtain a slip of paper/invoice which you take to the **Banco National** (That round, tapered white building with Edison Plaza on the top). Pay the \$2.00 and get it stamped by the teller, and bring this back to the office.

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- this time, stand in the **Retiro de Documento** (green sign) line-up. Again they told me to come back tomorrow until I pleaded that I had driven all the way from Santa Clara. I waited about an hour for my now authenticated, stamped, document.

- Now you need to get a blood test - the doctor knows the forms - One is a general health certificate, the other the result of a blood test showing sugar levels, blood type, etc. This is called "tipo de sangre si licencia no la tiene" (show this to your doctor if they don't speak English - Make SURE your blood type is on the certificate).

NOTE: If your blood sugars are too high, as mine were, you will need to re-test or get a note from your doctor that this condition is being treated, otherwise your application for a Panamanian driver's license will be rejected. Drink lots and lots of water the day before your test, make sure you fast the full 24 hours or more - and don't drink alcohol the day before your test.

- Bring your originals **and** the certified copies back to Sertracen offices to apply for your license
- Good luck!!! Roberto Chocolate