

JUL 30 1998



Department of Human Resources
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FIA INFORMATION MEMO

Control Number:

FIA/OPR#99-02

Issuance Date:

July 31, 1998

**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS**

Charles E. ...
**FROM: LYNDA FOX, DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR PROGRAMS AND
LOCAL OPERATIONS**

RE: JOINTLY OWNED LICENSED VEHICLES

PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY, RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS

SUMMARY

This information memo is in response to questions from local departments about jointly owned vehicles. Action Transmittal #96-17 issued November 9, 1995, provided policy about determining if a resource is inaccessible. As stated in the Action Transmittal, that policy does not apply to vehicles. Although a licensed vehicle cannot be considered an inaccessible resource, there are certain situations in which we can consider a vehicle as unavailable to the customer. Following are questions and answers to clarify treatment of unavailable licensed vehicles.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Question: Since Action Transmittal #96-17 does not apply to vehicles and they are not excluded as an inaccessible resource, how should we handle jointly owned vehicles that are unavailable to the household?

Answer: There are specific rules that govern the treatment of vehicles. Vehicles that are jointly owned by a household member **and a nonhousehold member who does not live with the household are not counted if:**

- The vehicle is unavailable to the household member because the household member does not have possession of, or use of, the vehicle; and
- The household member is unable to sell the vehicle (e.g. the signature of the co-owner is needed and he or she will not sign).

Example A: Ms. A owns a car jointly with her mother. Ms. A has possession of the car and uses it to go to work. Since this vehicle is available to Ms. A, it is included in determining Ms. A's eligibility for food stamps, regardless of whether her mother agrees to sell it.

Example B: Mr. B owns a vehicle jointly with his wife. When Mrs. B moved to another residence, she took the vehicle. His wife will not agree to sell the car. Since Mr. B does not live in the same household with Mrs. B and he does not have possession of the vehicle, it is unavailable to him. The value of the vehicle is not counted when determining Mr. B's eligibility for food stamps.

2. Question: Can we exclude solely or jointly owned vehicles that the household is prevented from selling because of a court injunction or probate?

Answer: A licensed vehicle is excluded from countable resources during the period of time that the household is legally prohibited from selling the vehicle.

INQUIRIES

Please call Kay Finegan at 410-767-7939 if you have any questions.

cc: FIA Executive Staff
FIA Management
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OIM Help Desk
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