

Driving while in another state

Every occupation has its idiosyncrasies. Even driving a car can be related to your work as a traveling nurse. Did you ever think about what would happen if you were stopped by the police in another state and your residency was questioned? Identifying where you live as a traveler can be challenging to others. I really never thought about it until I spoke with Joseph Smith with TravelTax (www.traveltax.com) in Norfolk Nebraska.

Joseph and I were discussing a few tips regarding red flags that tax auditors may look for such as car tags, registrations, bank accounts and mailing addresses that don't correlate with your home state. Even if it requires a trip home to renew your tags, it can be worth it, he says.

Then, Joseph began to share a few stories about nurses that have been stopped for speeding while driving in another state. He has heard a few stories about nurses in CA that have been pulled over for speeding or expired tags. The officers asked where they were headed and after further questioning made a determination that they were in violation of state residency laws and insisted that they needed to register their car in California. Evidently the package didn't look right. It wasn't clear to the officer as to what state they were really living in. I guess car tags can be a really big deal to tax auditors and law enforcement.

How can a traveler avoid such a situation? It is a good idea for all of us to think about this ahead of time so we take the right steps when the time comes. Joseph made a few suggestions himself. He said:

- 1) Don't speed (that's a good idea)
- 2) Keep a copy of your travel contract in your glove compartment.
- 3) When asked where you are headed, do not say "work", say something to the effect that you are there for X months under contract to work at such and such facility.
- 4) Keep your tags current and registered in your home state

If the officer insists on your violation, take the matter to trial. You are entitled to do that. When you go to trial, don't argue the speeding, argue the residency issue. I don't hear of this happening all that often, but it is a good idea to think about situations ahead of time and play it smart.