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U.S. ARMY MANEUVER SUPPORT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FT. LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI



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FLW military police to check auto glass tint shade

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – Newly acquired technology is allowing Fort Leonard Wood’s military police officers to start enforcing existing auto window tint regulations.

Currently, Missouri law states that front driver and front passenger windows must allow 35 percent of light through the window. Anything less than 35 percent can be cited.

“Missouri has had this law since 2002, so it is not new. It is something that we have not been enforcing, because we did not have the equipment to check the applied window tint. So, the first step of our enforcement plan is educating the public about the law,” said Lt. James Stewart, Traffic Section officer-in-charge.

Fort Leonard Wood’s military police officers are now using digital tint meters to check windows.

“Missouri Statute 307.173 allows for a three percent variance in devices used to check the window, so as long as the tint meters display a number of 32 or higher the vehicle is in compliance with state law,” Stewart said. “The fine (if your vehicle is registered in Missouri) is \$75.”

According to Staff Sgt. Derek Atwood, Traffic Management and Collisions Investigations noncommissioned officer-in-charge, vehicles that are not registered in Missouri will also be subject to enforcement.

He said service members and Department of Defense employees would have their chain of commands notified if they are violating their state’s window tint laws.

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Vehicles that have window tint below the manufacture's AS-1 line on windshields are also in violation of state laws. The manufacturer marks most windshields.

"The windshield is not to be tinted - except the top portion, which is normally tinted by the manufacturer," Stewart said.

Enforcing the tint law is important to Stewart, because he said it all comes down to safety.

"It is a traffic-safety issue, as well as an officer-safety issue. If an individual applies window tint to their vehicle's front window below the standard and then they operate their vehicle in limited light, low visibility conditions, it could result in a serious accident," Stewart said. "It also reduces the ability of law enforcement officers from seeing inside the passenger compartment, which could have a subject holding a weapon."

Atwood agreed.

"There are two key points with tint. Imagine driving at night wearing sunglasses — you might as well be driving blind. Tint at night makes your blind-spots extremely difficult to accurately judge your movement and precision in a vehicle," Atwood said.

"It is also about officer safety. We unfortunately live in a world today where there is no such thing as a routine traffic stop for any law enforcement officer. It's the fear of the unknown with every traffic stop. Even with a vehicle with legal tint, we have no idea who or what is in there until we have approached the vehicle," Atwood added.

Drivers can have their vehicles checked by bringing them to the Military Police Station, Building 1000.

"We have three instruments, and they give you an instant reading after you slide the meter on the window," Stewart said.

Stewart said Fort Leonard Wood units can coordinate with the traffic section to host a safety day or vehicle inspection session.

According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol, there are medical necessity exemptions to window tint laws.

Examples of medical conditions that may qualify under these exemptions are: lupus, sunlight allergy, photosensitivity and melanoma.

"Typically, if a vehicle is stopped for a window tint-related traffic violation, in order to qualify for the medical exemption and avoid a citation, the affected driver or passenger must present the law enforcement officer with documentation that identifies the medical necessity," Stewart said.

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According to Missouri State Highway Patrol, to obtain a medical window tint permit, drivers need to take a prescription from a physician and the vehicle with tinted windows to a Highway Patrol headquarters.

If you have any questions, contact Atwood at 573.596.0131, ext. 61074 or Stewart at 573.596.0131, ext. 60593.

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For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at 573.563.4145.

Encl. (1) Photo

Photo outline: Staff Sgt. Derek Atwood, Traffic Management and Collisions Investigations noncommissioned officer-in-charge, uses a tint meter to check the depth of tint shade added to this driver side window. The meter read 34 percent, making the tint added by the owner within legal limits.

(Melissa Buckley is a Guidon photojournalist)

About Fort Leonard Wood

Fort Leonard Wood is a thriving and prosperous installation that has evolved from a small basic training post 70 years ago to a premier Army Center of Excellence that trains more than 80,000 military and civilians each year.

Home to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood now trains and educates service members and develops doctrine and capabilities for the Training and Doctrine Command's U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, U.S. Army Engineer School, and U.S. Army Military Police School, three gender integrated Initial Military Training brigades, and the Army's largest Noncommissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, a large Forces Command unit that is responsible for all deployable capabilities at Fort Leonard Wood. A colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment, which are both the largest on any Army installation, are located on Fort Leonard Wood; a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.
