

DIGITAL ROAD TAX AND LICENCE EXPLAINED

PETALING JAYA: The announcement that private vehicles no longer need to display their motor vehicle licence (road tax) on their windscreens has been met with mixed reactions. Some have poured cold water on the move, citing concerns such as lack of internet connectivity in some areas, among others.

FMT takes a closer look at the plan, as well as the MyJPJ app to understand its implementation better.

Who can benefit from this exemption?

At present, this exemption only extends to private vehicles (cars and motorcycles) owned by Malaysians.

Other vehicles (commercial, company owned, public service vehicles such as e-hailing, and vehicles owned by foreigners) come later as the roll-out is done in stages.

Why digitise the system?

According to transport minister Loke Siew Fook, this move would help reduce congestion and long lines at JPJ counters, as drivers no longer need to collect physical copies at these counters.

However, he clarified that this does not mean road users no longer have to pay a fee to renew their road tax and license.

The MyJPJ app

Drivers are encouraged to download the MyJPJ phone application to access their digital motor vehicle licences and driving licences.

The app allows drivers to check their personal information and of their vehicle that's stored on JPJ's database, such as their driving licence, road tax, driving test results, summons, and even stolen cars.

Loke, in a Facebook post addressing concerns raised by road users, assured them that it is not mandatory to download the app.

“Downloading the app is merely an option to obtain a copy of the digital road tax and license. Even if you don't have the app, the authorities can check the information on their gadgets.”

Since the announcement, road users have also complained of glitches with the app. Loke said this is due to high traffic and it is being remedied.

No smartphone or internet access?

Loke said this is also not a problem as physical road tax stickers and driving licenses can still be obtained from JPJ, the road transport department.

“Don't worry, the digital licence is not mandatory. You can still obtain the road tax sticker and a physical licence from JPJ,” Loke wrote in his Facebook question and answer.

This was of particular concern for those who did not own smartphones, those who do not have internet access and senior citizens.

What if I drive someone else's car?

This was another major concern raised by road users who were driving other people's cars.

Loke said for those who have opted to be completely digital and do away with the road tax sticker, they can print a copy of the digital road tax to be

kept in the car so that those other than the owner can show the road tax if asked by authorities.

“It’s simple, the digital road tax can be printed and kept in the car. However, even if you do not have a copy of it, it is not against the law. The authorities can check the details on their gadgets,” he said.

Do other countries do this?

Transport consultant Rosli Azad Khan said countries like the Netherlands have digital systems to detect a vehicle’s information, however a physical driving licence is still required at all times.

“The Netherlands still uses plastic driving licences, but everything else is digitised” he told FMT.

In Singapore, the use of road tax stickers was phased out in 2017, and driving licences were digitised in 2020, according to Channel NewsAsia. Those details are available in the Singpass app, which also serves as the republic’s digital IC.