

PM: Parliament to weigh 7-day ease for motorists to fix defects



Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar

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Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has defended the surge of traffic tickets issued in recent days but says there will be no reduction in fines. However, she said yesterday that her Government is preparing to introduce a system to give drivers time to fix vehicle defects before penalties take effect.

In a statement posted on Twitter, the Prime Minister said the spike in violations confirms widespread disregard for the law, adding that many of those fined were not caught off guard but were already aware of defects or expired documentation on their vehicles.

However, she said she was cognisant of the people's complaints, saying when she was sworn in as Prime Minister, she said, "I will never be detached from your feelings and aspirations. I will never do my own thing while the country cries out for their needs. I will always be listening. I will be following you. You will be my priority.

You must always know that you have leaders who cares and understands your

problems.”

Despite that comment, she stressed there would be no reprieve on the increased penalties or enforcement, saying, “There will absolutely be NO REDUCTION in traffic fines and strict enforcement will continue until these reforms are made... it does not matter if you are UNC, PNM or any other grouping... if you break the traffic laws, ANYBODY GETS IT!!!”

The PM promised Government will move to Parliament in the coming weeks to introduce a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning System, which will require authorities to give motorists time to repair vehicle defects before fines are enforced.

The proposal applies to a range of offences listed in the Ninth Schedule, setting either a three-day or seven-day compliance period depending on the severity of the defect.

Drivers will have three days to correct issues such as: missing identification lights for number plates at night, taxis without passenger capacity printed on the right front door, vehicles without Tare and Maximum Gross Weight markings, vehicles without silencers, unauthorised lights or lettering, missing headlamps, park lights, tail lights, horns, rear-view mirrors, notices for left-handdrive vehicles, advertisements on taxi windows, and the absence of a spare tyre in public service vehicles.

A seven-day warning period will apply to more serious or potentially hazardous defects, including damaged windscreens and other defective fittings, vehicles emitting excessive smoke or vapour, noisy vehicles, and those with broken or non-functional windscreen wipers.

Under the proposed system, penalties would only take effect if drivers fail to fix the identified problem within the allowed timeframe.

Government says the change is intended to protect law-abiding citizens while still maintaining firm enforcement against genuine traffic delinquency.

However, Persad-Bissessar also revealed that Government has been told that “a small minority of traffic wardens, licensing officers and TTPS officers have been abusing the ticketing system and terrorising law-abiding citizens.”

She said both delinquent drivers and any misbehaving officers will be addressed.