



RESPONSES TO COVID-19:

AGENCY OVERVIEWS, UPDATES, AND CHANGES IN SERVICE

June 3, 2020

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DRIVER SERVICES

In mid-March, the Department of Justice's Motor Vehicle Division and County Treasurers' Offices altered general operations to continue offering driver and vehicle services, while implementing social distancing and restricting public access. As restrictions in Montana have relaxed, exam stations and county treasurer offices are again greeting customers. However, a number of extensions and changes remain in place providing service alternatives to customers.

At the request of Attorney General Fox, and under a directive from Governor Bullock, Montanans with driver licenses, including commercial driver licenses (CDLS) that expired in March, April and May were granted a 90-day extension to renew. Driving records will report these licenses as valid in the system, but the physical card will show expired. The 90-day extension has not been applied to driver licenses expiring on or after June 1, 2020

While all exam stations are open for in-person visits, MVD continues to encourage Montanans to use the online or mail-in renewal options.

- Online renewal is available for Class D driver licenses, the most common license held by Montanans, expiring in the next six months or are within the three-month grace period. Online renewal is available for commercial driver licenses expiring in the next six months or are within the three-month grace period.
- Mail-in renewal is available for Montana driver licenses, including Class D and CDL, expiring in the next 6 months or expired on or after March 16, 2019.
- Certain requirements for online or mail-in driver license renewals are also suspended. Montanans who need to renew a driver's license may self-certify their ability to drive instead of requiring forms signed by medical and vision professionals. Online and mail-in renewals are valid for a maximum of two years and will be offered for the duration of the declared state-of-emergency.

In addition to the renewal extensions, new Montana residents have a 90-day extension for securing a Montana driver license.

After a brief suspension of service, the Division resumed Class D drive tests on April 29, 2020. MVD rescheduled every drive test for customers whose tests were canceled because of the temporary suspension.

More information on service changes are available <https://dojmt.gov/driving/>.

Keep up-to-date with updates in service at: <https://dojmt.gov/driving/mvd-service-updates/>

FEDERAL WAIVERS FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVERS

The Federal Motor Carrier Administration (FMCSA) granted several waivers to assist commercial drivers. These waivers were incorporated into the Governor's directives. The FMCSA is evaluating whether further waivers to federal commercial driver license regulations will be granted.

Montana is utilizing two of the federal waivers:

- Medical Examiner's Certificate (MEC). For individuals with a valid MEC on February 29 and whose MEC expired, these MEC expiration dates were extended through June 30, 2020. This waiver benefited commercial drivers who were unable to get into a doctor to obtain a current certificate.
- Hazardous Materials Endorsement (HME). For individuals with a HME that expired or would expire between March 1, 2020 and July 31, 2020 a 180-day extension was granted, unless otherwise modified by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Exemptions are being granted, if an individual was unable to initiate or complete the required security threat assessment before the end of the expiration date. Commercial drivers with a HME must renew in person at a driver license station.

OTHER SERVICES

MVD created a dedicated email at MVDcovid19@mt.gov to handle inquiries from the public.

The Interlock Program is considered an essential service. Courts in Montana may require a DUI offender to install and maintain Ignition Interlock Devices on their vehicles as either a condition of sentence or a prerequisite to receiving a probationary license. All calibrations were granted a 30-day extension to the required 60-day cycle for a total 90-day calibration cycle. The department is allowing a mail-in calibration service to swap out handheld systems. Permit lockouts are being reset over the air and the resulting calibration may be completed by either an in-person or mail-in process.

VEHICLE SERVICES

For vehicle title work, owners have a 90-day extension to title and register vehicles transferred after March 16, 2020. Dealerships also have a 90-day extension to submit a customer's paperwork to county offices.

Additionally, new Montana residents have a 90-day extension to register and title vehicles.

MVD reminds Montanans that renewals can be handled online and by mail. Vehicle registration renewals may be completed online up to 30 days past the month shown on the vehicle's registration tab. The Division provides information on online and mail-in renewals on the <https://dojmt.gov/driving/vehicleservices/>

Many county offices are conducting business under altered services and MVD has compiled information outlining special conditions by county. An overview of all 56 counties is available <https://dojmt.gov/driving/mvd-service-updates/>.

OTHER ACTIONS

Offices are practicing social distancing. A limited number of customers are allowed in waiting rooms and spaces are wiped down hourly and after each customer. Plexiglass guards are installed at all permanent stations.

At MVD Headquarters, employees who are able continue to work from home. Split shifts have been discontinued. To maintain social distancing, staff workspaces will be spread throughout the building to keep occupancy between 50-75 percent of capacity. Employees continue to conduct meetings by phone or online resources. Socializing and movement between workspaces and floors in the building is limited.

REAL ID

On March 26, President Trump announced that the REAL ID enforcement date would be postponed until October 1, 2021 due to COVID-19. Montanans are not required to get a REAL ID compliant license or ID. However, a Montana REAL ID compliant license or ID or other form of federally recognized identification will be required to fly domestically or access federal facilities by October 1, 2021. As of May 2020, Montana has issued 78,142 REAL ID compliant licenses or IDs.

For more information on REAL ID, go to <https://mtrealid.gov>.

FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

MVD does not expect to see significant financial impact from the COVID-19 crisis for Fiscal Year 2020. The most substantial impact has been on operational resources as more Driver and Vehicle Services are pushed to online and mail-in fulfillment. MVD expects to see continued increase in resource demands as customer volume grows with the opening of the state.