



Plan for Addressing Road Test Backlogs – Phased Return

Updated June 16, 2020

Overview of Road Test backlog created during the COVID-19 Stay at Home order:

- Total Regular Class D road tests canceled: 19,041
- Total Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) road tests canceled: 881
- Total Motor Cycle road tests canceled: 53

PLAN FOR ADDRESSING BACKLOGS (Class D)

Summer is the busiest time for road tests at DVS exam stations. We are taking into consideration **three factors** in order to portray a transparent and realistic picture of our approach to addressing the road test backlog.

1. The number of **canceled tests** due to the stay at home order (outlined above).
2. Anticipated failed tests resulting in **retests** (fail rate is 28% for those under 18 years of age and 49% for 18 and older).
3. **Regular anticipated demand** for tests this summer (based on 2019 summer numbers).

Keeping the above three factors in mind, we anticipate a need for **81,478 Class D road tests between June 1, 2020 and October 31, 2020**. Here is the breakdown:

Total Canceled tests:	19,041
Add retests on rescheduled canceled tests anticipated:	6,848
Add anticipated 2020 summer demand based on 2019:	40,748
Add anticipated 2020 summer retests anticipated:	<u>14,841</u>
TOTAL Class D tests anticipated June 1- Oct 31, 2020:	<u>81,478</u>

Below is our plan to provide these tests, and potentially more based on staffing levels, AND get caught up by October 31, 2020.

Location Consolidation, Expanded Hours, Phased Return

- June 1 – Oct 31: Mon-Fri, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at all 14 exam stations listed below
- June 20 – Oct 31: Add Saturdays 8 a.m. to 12 noon at 3 Metro exam stations (Arden Hills, Plymouth and Eagan)
- July 13 – Oct 31: Add one Saturday a month 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at each of the 11 non-metro exam stations and potentially add all day Saturdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 pm at three Metro exam stations (Arden Hills, Plymouth and Eagan)

We will evaluate reopening additional exam stations in late summer. This will be dependent on our progress with addressing the road test backlog and staffing levels.

The above plan will allow us to successfully address the anticipated demand for road tests this summer AND get completely caught up on all canceled road tests no later than October 31, 2020.

14 exam stations currently open and providing road tests:

1. Arden Hills
2. Anoka
3. Eagan
4. Plymouth
5. Rochester
6. Mankato
7. Fairmont
8. Marshall
9. Willmar
10. Detroit Lakes
11. St. Cloud
12. Duluth
13. Grand Rapids
14. Bemidji

The DVS Town Square office in St. Paul is open for knowledge tests and other transactions but not for road tests.

RESCHEDULING/SCHEDULING CANCELED & NEW ROAD TESTS – Concerns and Progress

We are hearing from the public and legislators about their concerns regarding the rescheduling of canceled road tests, as well as the ability to schedule new road tests. The following information should clarify our approach and provide a snapshot of the progress made since we returned from the stay at home order:

- The online application for rescheduling canceled road tests was opened on May 22. It was prioritized based on the earliest canceled tests.
- The ability to schedule new tests was opened on June 8, 2020.
- We canceled 19,041 Class D road tests appointments. As of June 13, 2020, **13,512 (71%) of these canceled tests have been rescheduled.**
- As of June 13, 2020, there are a total of **21,842 Class D road tests currently scheduled.**
 - 13,512 of these tests are rescheduled cancelled appointments and 8,330 are new appointments.
 - Of the 21,842 scheduled:
 - Metro (Arden Hills, Eagan, Plymouth): 11,674
 - Greater MN: 10,168
- We are currently averaging 630 road tests a day and, as of June 15, 2020, we have completed 9,015 class D road tests.
- We usually only open approximately one-third of our road tests appointments for the next six months on our online schedule. This is to accommodate changes in staffing levels, especially at the current time. Every exam station will make available additional road test appointments at

each of our 14 locations every week based on number of examiners available, overtime assigned and temporary/permanent positions filled.

- If there are no open appointments available at a selected exam station online, customers may still be able to book an exam during the summer. That's because two-thirds of the remaining appointments are still available and will be opened gradually each week based on staffing levels, examiners available, overtime assigned and temporary/permanent positions filled. We are also monitoring COVID trends to decide when might be the appropriate time to open a few additional locations. We are managing the number of open appointments in order to ensure against the need to cancel any appointments we may not be able to honor in the future due to unanticipated staffing fluctuations.
- **If you are looking for a road test appointment, you are encouraged to check the schedule at least weekly to check for current availability.**

PROGRESS SINCE REOPENING DVS EXAM STATIONS

CDL Road tests:

April 28: DVS received Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) approval to do modified CDL road tests using GoPro cameras, cell phones and a chase vehicle with two examiners. This effort was focused on responding to COVID-19 concerns AND meeting the needs of essential truckers in partnership with the Minnesota Trucking Association (MTA).

April 28 – May 22, 2020: DVS provided **786 modified CDL road tests** at eight DVS exam stations across the state. There were 274 fails (35%).

May 26: DVS resumed regular 'in cab' CDL road tests using PPE and enhanced screening and sanitization procedures.

May 26 – June 10, 2020: DVS administered **599 CDL road tests** (28% fail rate).

CLASS D Road tests:

May 26: DVS resumed regular 'in cab' class D using PPE and enhanced screening and sanitization procedures.

May 26 – June 10, 2020: DVS administered **6,995 class D road tests** (26% fail rate)

Motorcycle tests:

May 18: DVS reopened the Saint Paul Town Square location and six additional exam stations. Motorcycle testing began on May 19.

May 19 – June 10, 2020: DVS administered **311 motorcycle road tests** (10% fail rate).

Knowledge/Permit tests

May 18: DVS reopened the Saint Paul Town Square location and six additional exam stations. Knowledge testing and motorcycle testing began on May 19.

May 19 – June 10, 2020: DVS administered **18,298 knowledge tests** (31% fail rate)

Online Services:

June 2 – June 10, 2020: Since the waiver of photo and vision test legislation passed and we have been able to implement online standard DL renewals with no changes, we have completed **16,127 online standard driver's license renewals**.

April 8 – June 10, 2020: Since the online seasonal CDLs and CDL upgrades legislation passed, we have issued **174 seasonal CDLs** and **132 CDL Upgrades**.

CURRENT STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ADDRESS BACKLOGS

- **Consolidating locations:** We are building staffing efficiencies and addressing the backlogs by consolidating 93 exam stations to 14 exam stations located in each region of the state. The consolidation allows us to administer 33% more road tests than we would have if we had reopened all DVS exam stations.
- **No camera operations:** DVS exam stations are focusing primarily on knowledge tests and road tests. All other driver license services are being diverted to deputy registrars and driver license agents in communities across the state (172 of 174 deputy registrars are open statewide).
- **Examiners focus on exams:** Staffing assignments at the 14 consolidated exam stations focus greater than 90% of examiners' time on road tests. Any counter service, screening of customers, sanitizing procedures, and knowledge tests are assigned to Customer Service Specialist (CSS) staff through redeployments or temporary staff hires.
- **Communication Plan:** The DPS office of communications has played an integral role over the last few weeks reminding the public to 'help us help them' and outlining the new business procedures. Messages have been developed and delivered widely regarding wearing a mask when you come for your test; be prepared to sanitize your vehicle before an examiner steps in; do not be a 'no show'; come prepared to pass the first time; only applicants allowed in the exam building except if the driver is under 18. DVS developed a detailed return to operations plan outlining PPE use and screening that helped inform communication strategy.
- **Staggered Shifts and Overtime:** We have been staggering shifts to accommodate health and childcare needs during these uncertain times. We have been working closely with our staff and AFSCME partners to support our staff while serving Minnesotans. We have been offering one hour of overtime at the beginning or end of the workday for staff who volunteer to work extra hours. Hours at all 14 exam stations is 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- **Supplement examiner pool:** Over the years, many examiners have moved into other jobs at DPS or recently retired. Our intent is to reach out to these ex-examiners and invite them back to help us through the next 3-6 months. Retirees could come back on pro-appointments; current staff could come back as reassignments at their current salary levels with an agreement with their current supervisors.
- **Grow third-party CDL testing program:** We are partnering with the Minnesota State Center for Transportation Excellence, Minnesota Trucking Association, MnDOT and other partners to brainstorm how we can partner to address the backlog of CDL tests and grow the program with a focus on standards and safety well into the future. DVS also has a proposal to shift the first and second tests to third-party programs. This will require legislation.
- **Temporary Exam Adjustments:** All aspects of the class D road test are being evaluated to determine if they are still needed to assess driving skills or if a certain maneuver is repetitive and can be removed from the exam to maximize efficiencies.

We have made two changes to our class D road tests in order to save time and supplement sanitizing procedures without compromising standards or safety:

- Eliminated the equipment inspection since less than five percent of applicants fail this part of the test.
- Instructed examiners to terminate a test as soon as an applicant makes an 'automatic fail' error or has enough deductions to fail, whichever is sooner.

We are also considering eliminating the need for applicants to sign the exam scoring sheet.

These efficiencies will reduce the time needed to test, which reduces time in the car and could increase the number of tests that DVS can administer.

- **No paper tests:** In order to save time and build efficiencies, we are focusing on computer knowledge tests and will not offer paper tests at our 14 exam stations and TSQ through October 31, 2020. We will assess and offer paper tests on a case-by-case basis upon request from individuals with special needs.
- **Scheduling efficiencies:** The FAST team helped develop a solution to fairly and efficiently reschedule the canceled tests without needing to tie up examiners and other staff with rescheduling appointments by phone. Canceled tests were given preference before the online schedule was opened up for new candidates on June 8.
- **MSP Airport REAL ID office:** We plan to defer reopening the MSP REAL ID Office until August 1, 2020, due to our staffing constraints and the low travel volumes.
- **Hiring exception for exam staff:** DVS has received a hiring exception from MMB during the current hiring freeze and is now in the process of filling the 29 open exam station positions (CSSIs, E&Is, and Assistant Regional Supervisors).
- **Taking care of our staff:** We acknowledge the anxiety and pressures on our staff given the current COVID-19 concerns, as well as the death of George Floyd. We are committed to providing the leave options, flexible work schedules, reassignment opportunities and teleworking options. We ask employees to work with their supervisors to establish a schedule that is mutually beneficial to them and DVS.
- **Virtual lobby:** The virtual lobby developed by our FAST team has been a tremendous success at all 14 exam stations and TSQ. Customers can practice social distancing by waiting in their car or elsewhere and receive a text message when it is their turn at the counter.
- **Health & Safety:** Consolidation of exam stations maximizes our ability to safeguard the health and safety of our staff and customers by allowing us to consistently and appropriately implement and enforce CDC and MDH guidance and health screening. Our limited number of locations have been equipped with Plexiglas or tempered glass at our counters for the safety of our employees and customers.
- **COVID Relief Funds:** We are currently working with MMB to identify the potential of COVID-19 relief funding to help with overtime costs that will allow us to offer extended hours and weekend road tests.
- **Collaboration with AFSCME:** We are working closely with our AFSCME partners to balance employee needs while also aggressively addressing our backlog of road tests. We are collaborating on ways to limit the potential of a COVID-19 outbreak in any of our locations, which would be a major setback to our staff and operations.
- **AAMVA Best Practices:** We are actively participating on two calls a week with DMVs across the country, and we're partnering with other state DMVs to exchange best practices. We have been sharing information with several states regarding our modified CDL testing method, online services and virtual lobby.

NOTABLE STEPS TAKEN IN RECENT WEEKS

- **Modified CDL testing:** On April 28, we began offering alternate CDL testing, approved by FMCSA. It uses a GoPro camera and cell phone; no examiner is in the cab, but rather a chase vehicle with two examiners balances driving, giving instructions, observing and scoring. We offered this resource-intensive option through the duration of the stay at home order. Link to WCCO story at: <https://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2020/04/30/coronavirus-updates-minnesota-driver-examstations-resume-testing-for-commercial-driver-licensing-only/>
- **Teleconferencing variance for driver's education:** On April 7, DVS approved a variance that allowed driver's education providers to offer an alternative to classroom education with teleconferencing options. Students currently enrolled in driver's education can complete their requirements via this teleconferencing option.
- **Legislation passed:** Thanks to bipartisan support, bills were passed during the stay at home order that positively impacted DVS operations in the following areas:
 - **Extensions for driver's licenses, permits, identification cards and disability parking certificates:** Provided conforming language so state statute mirrors the federal extension for driver's license for two months beyond the month in which the peacetime emergency ends.
 - **Farm/Seasonal CDL:** Provided online options for new and renewed farm/seasonal CDLs. Waives photo and vision screening requirements.
 - **REAL ID documentation & staff:** Made it easier for Minnesotans to get a REAL ID by simplifying and increasing the kinds of documentation accepted. Also provided funding to hire temporary staff for REAL ID processing
 - **Out of State drivers:** Allowed flexibility and more time to apply for a Minnesota credential.
 - **Waived vision screening and photo requirement for the next 12 months:** This allowed DVS to develop an online renewal service for the renewal or replacement of standard class D driver's licenses, reduced in-person visits at crowded exam hubs and reduced exposure to COVID-19 as we return to work.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS THAT REQUIRE LEGISLATIVE ACTION OR STATUTORY CHANGE

- **Grow our third-party CDL testing program:** DVS has proposed language to legislators that would allow a third-party tester to conduct the first and second CDL test. After the second failed test, the third test and each test thereafter would need to be conducted by DVS. Third-party testing for CDLs would continue to be strictly regulated by federal guidelines that address the concerns around conflict of interest and potential fraud, some of which has been observed in Class D third-party testing in other states. CDL third-party testing would also allow DVS testing staff to shift focus to class D road tests. A CDL test requires a 90-minute appointment while a Class D test is a 20-minute appointment. This proposal has received positive interest from the legislature.
- **'No show' fee:** One of the key inefficiencies with road tests at DVS has been the issue of "no shows" for road tests. Annually, 26,000 Minnesotans do not show up for their scheduled road tests resulting in lost time and resources. Rep. Hornstein and Rep. Benardy have recently proposed a "no show" fee, which we believe would be an excellent idea. It would most certainly help with optimizing testing efficiencies and addressing backlogs, especially since we will be testing by appointment only and not permitting any walk-ins for the next several weeks.
- **Online Knowledge/Permit Test:** DVS is seeking an appropriation of approximately \$450,000 from the VTRS technology general fund in order to invest in an online version of the knowledge/permit test

currently only offered in person at our exam locations and TSQ. This will reduce office visits, help with social distancing (currently a major challenge), as well as allow tests to be offered a lot more efficiently both directly by DVS, as well as through certified partners like correctional facilities, certified high school driver education programs and potentially community partners in the future. In 2019, DVS administered a total of 437,501 in-person knowledge tests across the state. This online test will multiply our capacity in a significant way while also ensuring the security and integrity of the test.

The DVS team – leadership, supervisors, staff and our AFSCME partners are committed to doing our best for Minnesotans in addressing the backlogs. In our first few weeks back, our examiners are already averaging approximately 630 class D road tests a day. This is higher than what we averaged last summer and we are doing it with fewer staff.

THANK YOU for your continued support and confidence.

Serving You,



Emma Corrie

Pronouns: she, her, hers

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