

NOTICE OF PROPOSED GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Press Release: WisDOT offers new ways to obtain driver licenses without visiting DMV

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 227.112, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is hereby seeking comment on a press release regarding two DMV driver license pilot programs [Wis. Stat. 343] a proposed guidance document.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Comments may be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 21 days by:

1. Department's website:

<https://trust.dot.state.wi.us/act369/?id=OPA634&uri=file:W/Releases/20DMV/Revoke5wholesalelicenses&division=OPA>

2. Mailing written comments to:

Office of Public Affairs
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
4822 Madison Yards Way
PO Box 7910
Madison, WI 53707-7910

WEBSITE LOCATION OF FINAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

The final version of this guidance document will be posted at wisconsin.gov to allow for ongoing comment.

AGENCY CONTACT

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WisDOT offers new ways to obtain driver licenses without visiting DMV

Online driver license renewal and new road test options begin May 11

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) today announced two pilot programs that will safely address a backlog of demand:

- Eligible persons with a Wisconsin driver license will be able to renew it online.
- Individuals under age 18, who successfully complete their required training and have the endorsement of a parent or guardian will be able to get their probationary driver license without completing a road test.

“The Division of Motor Vehicles has been at the forefront of making changes to protect the public and our associates during the public health emergency, while continuing to provide vital public services,” Secretary-designee Craig Thompson said. “These pilot programs represent innovative solutions to help Wisconsin address challenges created by the pandemic.”

The pilot programs begin May 11. Each program eliminates the need for in-person visits to a DMV service center by enabling drivers to complete the tasks online. The pilots allow the public to get service more quickly while maintaining safety.

Online driver license renewal

Due to COVID-19, approximately 80,000 people whose driver license expired have received an extension to renew. Those extensions, with late fees waived, expire July 25, 2020. This pilot program allows many customers who have delayed visiting a DMV to renew their driver license quickly and easily online at wisconsindmv.gov/renewDL.

To be eligible for this program, drivers must meet **all** the following:

- Must be a U.S. citizen with a regular (Class D) driver license (Commercial Driver Licenses do not qualify).
- Must be 64 years of age or under.
- No new medical restrictions.
- Has not had a negative change to their vision since the last renewal.

Customers who renew online will receive a confirmation email they can print and use until their new card arrives by mail within 10 days. The \$34 renewal fee remains the same. After the next normal renewal cycle of eight years, customers will need to visit a DMV for a new photo to complete the renewal.

Renewing online may not be an option for everyone. While the deadline for a REAL ID has been extended one year to October 1, 2021, customers wanting a driver license that is [REAL ID](#)-compliant will need to visit a DMV Customer Service Center. Without a REAL ID designation on a driver license or ID, travelers will need another form of identification, like a passport, for domestic air travel.

Road test waivers for 16- and 17-year-olds

DMV typically conducts approximately 2,100 road tests per week. Nearly 65 percent of these tests are for people under the age of 18, with 98 percent passing their road test on their first or second attempt. Wisconsin also has a Graduated Driver License (GDL) law that places strict expectations on drivers under 18. The GDL requirements have improved safety and will remain in place.

Beginning May 11, road tests may be waived for 16- and 17-year-olds who complete the required training and have their parent or guardian sign the [road test waiver](#). The criteria these drivers must meet to be granted a probationary driver license in Wisconsin include:

- They must hold an Instruction Permit (also known as a Learners Permit) violation free for at least six months prior to testing
- They must have completed driver education classes
- They have completed behind-the-wheel training with a licensed instructor
- They have completed at least 30 hours of driving with their parent/sponsor and their sponsor signs the road test waiver

The restrictions of a probationary graduated driver license still apply for at least nine months.

Parents or guardians are vital to ensuring novice drivers are equipped to safely drive. The waiver is not mandatory. Parents who opt to have their young driver take a road test at a DMV may schedule that appointment online beginning May 8.

“Safe driving is a result of practice and instruction. When young people learning to drive have completed all necessary requirements and demonstrated to their instructors and to their parents

or guardians that they are ready for a probationary driver license. This program, which has been safe and effective in other states for years, will allow them to move forward,” DMV Administrator Kristina Boardman said. “The DMV will offer road tests, but this pilot program will allow another path forward for those who qualify.”

DMV estimates a backlog of 16,000 road test requests; 10,000 of those will be eligible for the road test waiver.

[Road test appointments](#) can be made online beginning, Friday, May 8. Testing, by appointment only, begins May 26. DMV stopped doing road tests in mid-March due to COVID-19. When road tests resume, examiners will apply a seat cover when entering the driver’s vehicle and wear personal protective equipment (PPE), including a face shield, to protect the driver and themselves. After the exam, novice drivers will order their license online from home and the card will be sent within 10 business days.

DMV customer service centers will have expanded hours May 11 to May 22, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. The goal is to serve as many customers as possible who require an in-person visit while maintaining safe social distances in lobbies. Appointments are recommended.

These pilot programs are expected to continue through the 2020 calendar year.

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