

MVC extends license expiration dates, sets up new rules in effort to ease long lines

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Officials announced a slew of changes Thursday that they say should ease some of the [congestion and frustration that has been plaguing](#) MVC agencies across the state since they reopened this week after being closed for months during the [coronavirus](#) shutdown. As part of the changes, Gov. Phil Murphy and Motor Vehicle Commission officials announced extended expiration dates for license and registration renewals and vehicle inspections, in an effort to ease long lines and wait times at MVC agencies.

Officials also set new rules barring drivers from being able to “camp out” overnight at agencies to get a prime spot in line the next morning, the governor said. Officials said customers can’t line up on MVC property until 7 a.m., an hour before agencies open.

In addition, the MVC will expand a “blue ticket” system statewide in an effort to make sure that customers on line at agencies can be accommodated during the business day.

The expiration dates of drivers’ licenses, vehicle registrations, inspection stickers, non-license IDs and temporary tags will now be extended for several more months to give people more time and to reduce lines at agencies. [The MVC extended expiration dates](#) in March and again in May due to closures prompted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Documents expiring between March 13 and May 31 have been extended to September 30; those expiring between June 1 to August 31 have been extended to December 31. Commercial driver license expiration dates were previously extended to September 30.

[Republican lawmakers had called on Murphy](#) to extend the expiration dates of MVC documents by several months on Wednesday. [Agencies reopened on July 7 after being closed almost four months](#) since mid-March as a coronavirus precaution.

Procedures at agencies also have changed to set up a priority system and to give out numbered tickets to people on line that correspond to how many customers an individual agency can handle in a business day.

Drivers at licensing centers will be handled on a priority basis. New drivers who passed their road tests will receive the first blue tickets at agencies. Drivers who already have a license, and can drive under the new expiration date extensions, will be seen after new drivers have been served, officials said.

Customers also will not be allowed to line up on MVC property until 7 a.m. This comes a day after Murphy urged drivers not to “camp out” overnight at agencies to secure a spot on line when agencies open up.

South Brunswick police reported that drivers lined up as early as 10 p.m. Wednesday night and that agency hit a daily limit of 200 customers by 6 a.m. Thursday morning. Some drivers interviewed at the Eatontown MVC agency said they lined up at 11:30 p.m. Wednesday night to secure a spot for Thursday morning.

MVC agencies will continue to operate through Friday this week, but will be closed this Saturday. They will reopen on Monday under another change Murphy announced Wednesday. Agencies were scheduled to close on Mondays in July to accommodate employee furloughs.

[Murphy exempted MVC employees from state worker furloughs](#) in July so agencies could remain open an extra day.

“The furlough exemptions will support expanded staff starting next Monday,” said B. Sue Fulton, MVC chief Administrator in a statement. “We share the frustration of our customers and hear the complaints loud and clear. Our employees are working hard in a difficult climate to keep up with demand.”

On Tuesday, the MVC processed 7,824 new registrations and licenses, 15% more than an average day in the first quarter of 2020, before the COVID-19 outbreak, officials said.

Wednesday’s numbers were even higher, at 8,607 new registrations and licenses. Fulton cautioned that “new registrations and licenses” does not cover all transactions.

Officials said those figures show that the decision to designate agencies as Licensing or Vehicle Centers has resulted in “faster service and a full complement of staff that will be more efficient.”

“Check your documents and stickers,” Fulton advised. “You very well may be able to delay a trip to the agencies until some of the initial crush is past.”

Drivers who can do their [transactions online](#) will not be allowed to go to agencies to reduce crowding.

Republican lawmakers called on Murphy to have State Police handle traffic control. Other GOP ideas include hiring car dealers to register and title privately purchased vehicles and driving schools to process licenses for teen drivers who’ve passed the road test.

Assembly Minority Leader Jon Brammick called for MVC agencies to be open 12 hours a day, seven days a week and for Murphy to apologize to drivers.