



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

MEDIA STATEMENT

For Immediate Release
Attention: News Editors
Date: 27 August 2021

**MINISTER MBALULA EXTENDS LICENCE GRACE PERIOD
AND UNVEILS INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE DRIVING
LICENCE PROCESSES**

As we approach the end of the grace period for the renewal of driving licences on 31 August 2021, we have paid particular attention to the challenges experienced by drivers in this regard. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in restrictions that led to the closure of Driving Licence Testing Centres (DLTCs) resulting in backlogs. The previous extensions of the validity period were meant to enable an orderly clearing of the backlog.

We have conducted an assessment of the quantum of the backlog and evaluated the challenges motorists are experiencing in the process to renew their licences. We have also considered other factors such as the impact of a further extension as well as law enforcement capacity to ensure the rule of law prevails at all times.

Nationally, 1.2 million (1,210,965) licences not yet renewed out of a total of 2.8 million (2,852,388) expired licences. This represents 42.4% non-renewal, with 57.6% of all expired licences having been renewed.

The breakdown per Province of the number of licences not yet renewed against the total number that expired during the period extending from 26 March 2020 to date, is as follows:

- Gauteng accounts for the highest number of licences not yet renewed at 437,819 out of a total of 980,038 expired licences. This represents 44.6% non-renewal.
- KwaZulu-Natal has 195,200 licences not yet renewed out of a total of 448,889 expired licences. This represents 43.4% non-renewal.
- Western Cape has 153,901 licences not yet renewed out of a total of 430,546 expired licences. This represents 35.7% non-renewal.
- Limpopo has 110,389 licences not yet renewed out of a total of 241,207 expired licences. This represents 45.7% non-renewal.

- Mpumalanga has 98,067 licences not yet renewed out of a total of 234,899 expired licences. This represents 41.7% non-renewal.
- Eastern Cape has 87,291 licences not yet renewed out of a total of 194,528 expired licences. This represents 44.8% non-renewal.
- Free State has 53,593 licences not yet renewed out of a total of 133,486 expired licences. This represents 40% non-renewal.
- North-West has 55,128 licences not yet renewed out of a total of 136,466 expired licences. This represents 40.4% non-renewal.
- Northern Cape has 19,577 licences not yet renewed out of a total of 52,329 expired licences. This represents 37.4% non-renewal.

We remain concerned at this high backlog as it adversely impacts on effective law enforcement. We are, however, more concerned about the reasons that give rise to this state of affairs, which include the following:

- Capacity challenges which put tremendous pressure on DLTCs in processing renewals of driving licences.
- Corruption of officials entrusted with the system, where online booking is used, who block slots and sell these to those prepared to pay bribes.
- Slow speed and unavailability of the eNatis system causing frustrations for officials and motorists renewing their licences.
- Faulty live capture units resulting in long queues at DLTCs.
- Faulty eye testing equipment.
- Delays in validating fingerprints as live capture units are not linked to Home Affairs real time.

There are many more challenges that have been brought to our attention, to which we are attending with the necessary urgency.

In order to give motorists a fair opportunity to renew their licences, while we are rolling out a number of measures to improve efficiencies and resolve challenges, we have decided to extend further the grace period for the renewal of licences.

All learner's licences, driving licence cards, temporary driving licences and professional driving permits that expire during the period that commenced from 26 March 2020 up to and including 31 August 2021, are deemed to be valid and their validity periods

are extended for a further grace period ending on 31 March 2022. This extension comes into effect from the date of publication of the Directions in the Government Gazette.

We have never been under any illusion about the magnitude of the challenges facing DLTCs. Together with the MECs, we have been hard at work in addressing these challenges. In May 2021, the MINMEC adopted an Action Plan to modernize and turn-around our driving licencing system and licencing centres.

In the articulation of our road safety interventions, we have been emphatic that arresting the carnage on our roads must take centre-stage. Our Performance Agreement with the President enjoins us to reducing fatalities on the roads by 25% by March 2024. Too many people die on our roads due to, amongst others, reckless behaviour of motorists. Unlicensed drivers and those driving with fraudulent licences exarcebate this problem.

Driving Licence Testing Centres (DLTCs) provide an important service to our motorists, as they are an important support system to enable mobility, with many others relying on their licences for their livelihoods.

DLTC INTERVENTIONS

Considering that Gauteng poses the biggest challenge due to the large population of motorists, and the fact that it remains the only Province that has extensively deployed the online booking system, specific actions have been identified to tackle challenges specific to the Province.

Gauteng has experienced serious capacity challenges, which result, amongst others, in non-availability of slots to those who intend to renew their licences. In addition to the interventions the Province and the RTMC are making in arresting the corruption that has bedevilled the system, additional capacity will be added through the opening of 2 Driving Licence Testing Centres operated by the RTMC at the Waterfall Park in Midrand and the Eco Park in Centurion. These two centres will open their doors on 1 October 2021 and will operate 7 days a week, from 7am to 9pm. The operationalisation of these centres will add 35,380 renewal slots per month and increase Gauteng capacity for renewal slots by 48%. An email service for Gauteng users who experience difficulties with online bookings and renewing their licences has been activated.

A new DLTC in Tembisa opened its doors in July 2021. This has further augmented capacity in the Province.

The RTMC has fitted two buses with state of the art equipment to serve as mobile centres to assist with licence renewals. Once the RTMC registration as DLTC has been finalised, these buses will be deployed in Diepsloot and Alexandra. The planned deployment date is 1 October 2021.

In addition, 2 self service kiosks are being prepared for testing and should be rolled out by October 2021 to assist those who do not have immediate access to a DLTC.

As part of the rollout of a bouquet of services to improve customer experience, processes to introduce online payments are advanced and a banking partner has already been appointed.

While we had agreed with the MECs that operating hours of DLTCs must be extended, a number of Provinces have experienced challenges relating to overtime. However, significant progress has been made in this regard.

In 7 of the 9 Provinces, large Registering Authorities and DLTCs have extended their operating hours to include Saturdays, and further augmented their human resource capacity. Challenges are still being experienced in the Northern Cape and the City of Tshwane.

The RTMC has been in discussions with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding, which will pave the way for motorists to make use of private optometrists who will have authority to upload eye test results directly to the eNatis system. This process has been delayed by leadership challenges at the HPCSA.

The interface of live enrolment units with home affairs has been completed. This will enable immediate validation of the fingerprints, and address a challenge that has been a cause for delays.

One of the pressing challenges has been shortage of end-user equipment at DLTC level. Significant progress has been made in this regard with deployment of eNatis equipment across all Provinces.

Corruption is a cancer that eats away at the moral fibre of our society. It is a sickness we can only eradicate through collective effort. It can never be acceptable that motorists must pay bribes to officials or security personnel in order to get slots to renew their licences. Through collaborative efforts by all spheres of government, working closely with law enforcement authorities,

we will uproot this scourge from the system and ensure that those found guilty face the might of the law. The RTMC, through its anti-corruption unit will lead the charge to find wayward officials and those who aid them and ensure they face the most severe consequences. Our zero tolerance for fraud and corruption will find tangible expression in our interventions and we are determined to stamp out corrupt and criminal elements from our traffic management system.

Issued by : Fikile Mbalula
MINISTER OF TRANSPORT

More information: Lawrence Venkile
081 562 3493