

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

Office of the Sheriff

55 West Younger Avenue
San Jose, California 95110-1721
(408) 808-4605



Laurie Smith
Sheriff

MEMORANDUM

TO: Enforcement Staff

FROM: COVID-19 Incident Command Center

SUBJECT: ICC Directive 20-05 (DMV Closure/ Vehicle tow leniency)

DATE: 03/30/2020

It has come to the attention of the Incident Command Center through the Sheriff's Administration that the California Department of Motor Vehicles has closed for the foreseeable future. Due to the closure, the public will not have the ability to fulfill many basic DMV requirements, even online, including but not limited to the registering of vehicles and the renewal of driver licenses.

If a vehicle is towed for CVC 22651(o) based on a violation of 4000(a) (1) Expired Registration, people will be unable to get their vehicles registered and become compliant with the citation. Because individuals cannot comply with the citation sign-off requirements such as restoring registration, people will not be able to get their vehicles back, causing an undue hardship in the middle of a global pandemic.

Effective immediately and for the interim until further notice, enforcement deputies should refrain from towing vehicles based on minor vehicle code violations, such as 4000(a) (1). It is understood that there are circumstances where towing a vehicle is necessary or unavoidable; it is not the intention of this directive to prevent a tow in such circumstances.

Enforcement deputies should also refrain from issuing expired driver license citations, until further notice (please see attached memo from the DMV).

March 26, 2020

DMV Field Offices to Continue Serving the Public during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Essential services will continue by mail, through available online services, kiosks, virtually and other means. Virtual Field Office open for vehicle registration renewal, title transfers

Sacramento – The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is moving to offer Californians essential services online starting next week to continue processing critical transactions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Field offices will be temporarily closed to the public statewide beginning March 27 and reopen, virtually, on April 2. All in-office appointments at this time will be canceled. Customers are encouraged to check the dmv.ca.gov website for future appointment availability.

DMV online services will continue to be available at dmv.ca.gov. Customers can also take care of many tasks at the hundreds of kiosks throughout the state or through available local business partners. DMV's customer service centers will continue to operate during normal business hours at 1-800-777-0133 or connecting via the live chat feature on the DMV website.

DMV field office employees will return on Wednesday, April 1 to process transactions and begin training on the DMV Virtual Field Office, which began in a limited pilot March 23. The Virtual Field Office gives customers the capability to take care of transactions that previously required an in-person office visit by virtually interacting with DMV staff. Beginning April 2, 2020, customers initially can complete vehicle title transfers and complex vehicle registration renewals by visiting virtual.dmv.ca.gov. The DMV will gradually add more transactions to continue to provide alternatives to an in-person office visit.

The DMV is concerned about the health and safety of its customers, including seniors and those at risk for COVID-19. Following deep cleaning of the offices, expansion of virtual services and development of new protocols, DMV will offer in-person services in each region. More updates on how DMV is addressing the needs of its customers will be announced soon on its website.

Californians who do not have an urgent need to go to a DMV field office should delay their visit, including those interested in applying for a REAL ID. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has announced that the REAL ID enforcement date is October 1, 2021, and customers who want a REAL ID will have an opportunity to apply at a later date.

The temporary closing of offices is the latest in a number of actions the DMV already has taken during the coronavirus pandemic, including:

- Requesting California law enforcement to exercise discretion, for 60 days beginning March 16, before issuing citations for driving with a recently expired license or vehicle registration.
- Instituting appointment-only service for transactions that require an in-office visit.
- Canceling all behind-the-wheel drive tests to honor social distancing guidelines.
- Suspending extended office hours and Saturday service.

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