

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA THE
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES AGENCY PERFORMANCE
OVERSIGHT HEARING ON FISCAL YEARS 2019 – 2020**



Public Roundtable on
the District Department of Motor Vehicles Appointment Backlog

Testimony of
Gabriel Robinson, Director
Department of Motor Vehicles

Before the
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
Mary Cheh, Chairperson

October 5, 2020
12:00 pm
Virtual Hearing

Good afternoon, Chairperson Cheh, Committee members, councilmembers, and staff of the Committee. I am Gabriel Robinson, Director of the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles (DC DMV). I am pleased to testify before you today.

Prior to sharing the processes DC DMV has implemented to address in-person appointment backlogs, I would like to take a moment to thank Mayor Bowser and her administration, Chairperson Cheh, this Committee, and the rest of the Council for your leadership throughout the current public health emergency. I would also like to thank the public for their patience and understanding as DC DMV has made adjustments to our service operations over the past several months to address the safety of our customers and employees. Finally, I would like to extend a special thank you to our dedicated team of DC DMV employees who have continued to serve our residents throughout the public health emergency, while demonstrating incredible resiliency as they cope with new challenges within the workplace as well as at home.

With the Mayor's announcement of the public health emergency on March 11, 2020, DC DMV transitioned to modified services, closing our Georgetown and Rhode Island service centers, limiting walk-in hearings at Adjudication Services, and offering limited appointments at our Brentwood Road Test/CDL Office. Additionally, the Mayor's emergency Order extended the expiration date for all DC DMV documents expiring March 1 through the duration of the health emergency until 45 days after the health emergency concludes. As the severity and duration of the health emergency became evident, DC DMV, in consultation with the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM), discontinued all in-person services effective March 25, 2020, while communicating to the public that DC DMV remained operational with more than 55 services

available online. DC DMV remained in this operational status until the District transitioned to Phase One reopening on May 29, 2020.

On June 2, 2020, following the transition to Phase One, DC DMV opened our Southwest Service Center on an “appointment only” basis for limited services including, first time license and REAL ID conversions, first time title and registrations, and knowledge testing. While all other DC DMV locations remained closed through Phase One, most necessary services continued to be available to the public online through our website at dmv.dc.gov. DC DMV remained in this operational status until the District transitioned to Phase Two reopening on June 22, 2020.

Under Phase Two reopening, DC DMV began operations on an “appointment only” basis at all Service Centers, Adjudication Services, and the Brentwood Road Test/CDL Office. At the same time, the Inspection Station opened on a first-come, first-serve basis and our self-service (OBD) vehicle emissions inspection kiosk opened 24/7. Throughout Phase Two, the public continued to have the opportunity to complete more than 55 online services.

Moving to an “appointment only” business model during Phase One and Phase Two reopening allowed DC DMV to efficiently serve those residents who required in-person services, while maintaining a safe environment for our customers and our employees. DC DMV also took additional precautions to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) at all locations where our employees interact in-person with the public, including requiring all customers to wear a face covering prior to entering any of our locations, only permitting customers obtaining service to enter our facilities (with limited exceptions for customers who required additional assistance),

and ensuring customers and employees at all DC DMV locations maintain social distancing of six feet or more. Additionally, DC DMV implemented an enhanced cleaning and sanitation program during Phase One and Phase Two with multiple daily cleanings of commonly used areas and items, specifically at our service centers where in-person volume is the highest.

DC DMV's "appointment only" model has allowed many District residents to complete in-person transactions in a safe manner; however, we are aware of appointment lag times and DC DMV has recently implemented several new processes to help alleviate these backlogs, while continuing to maintain locations that are safe for our customers and employees. DC DMV began offering special in-person appointments in July at our Benning Ridge Service Center for the District's homeless population and returning citizens. At the same time, we facilitated special in-person appointments at our Adjudication Services location for residents who purchased a vehicle from a private seller and were required to register and title the vehicle. DC DMV also opened special in-person appointments at Adjudication Services for new District residents requiring a DC driver license/ID and vehicle registration. These special appointments continue to be scheduled on an "as needed" basis by DC DMV staff, and each customer receives an appointment confirmation email with detailed precautionary instructions they must follow at the time of their in-person visit to assure their safety and the safety of our employees. Additionally, DC DMV attempts to contact each customer with a scheduled appointment to assure they bring the proper documentation to their appointment to help facilitate a successful in-person transaction and minimize repeat visits that require additional appointments.

At the beginning of August, our Adjudication Services team launched a virtual hearing pilot for minor moving violations to address social distancing challenges. The pilot addresses this challenge by allowing all participants, including hearing examiners, police officers, and drivers wishing to contest their citations, to appear at a hearing remotely. DC DMV also took additional steps in September to serve more customer safely during the health emergency by releasing additional appointment slots through our online appointment scheduler. Hundreds of new appointment slots are now released most Tuesday's at 12:30 p.m. We have also been able to increase in-person appointment capacity by offering overtime to DC DMV employees and extending our appointment hours to 8 p.m. on Wednesday's at our Southwest and Benning Ridge Service Centers. Additionally, we have been able to increase staffing and offer Saturday appointments at our Rhode Island Service Center, which we had to close in August due to staffing shortages we experienced as a result of employees needing to use leave for COVID related illness and childcare. The improvements to our processes during the health emergency have also extended to our Inspection Station and Brentwood Road Test/CDL Office where we have streamlined the operational flow for vehicle inspections and road test examinations. Finally, throughout the health emergency, DC DMV has continued to review opportunities to expand our online transaction options. As an example, residents with a REAL ID, whose previous credential renewal was completed online or by mail, had been required to complete their next renewal in-person at a DMV Service Center. DC DMV removed this restriction in April so all residents with a REAL ID can now renew online.

Prior to concluding my remarks, I would like to share a few statistics with the Committee to further highlight how DC DMV has been supporting the needs of our residents since Mayor

Bowser announced the public health emergency on March 11, 2020. Since the beginning of the health emergency through September 24, 2020, DC DMV has made 44,132 in-person appointment slots available to the public. We have made an additional 65,452 in-person appointment slots available to the public through March 31, 2021. Additionally, between March 11 and September 22, 2020, DC DMV mailed product to 108,978 individuals generated from online transactions. Our Adjudication Services team has also been busy, completing 124,384 online hearings, 75,363 mail-in hearings, and 404 virtual hearings between March 11 and September 29, 2020. Finally, since our Inspection Station and Self-Service (OBD) Vehicle Emissions Inspection Kiosk reopened on June 23, 2020, 41,051 vehicle inspections have been completed at the Inspection Station and residents have completed 2,277 vehicle inspections using the Self-Service (OBD) Kiosk.

In conclusion, DC DMV is currently fully functional, and we continue to serve the public as demonstrated by the large volume of work the agency has produced since the beginning of the public health emergency. It should be noted that many other states have also extended expiration dates for DMV documents through executive orders during the health emergency. Those states, like the District, are also experiencing lag times for in-person DMV services. In response to residents seeking appointments, DC DMV will continue to identify opportunities to make more online transactions available, and also increase the availability of in-person transactions, when it is safe to do so. We remain committed to serving the public in a manner that keeps everyone safe, including our customers and our employees. On behalf of DC DMV, I thank Mayor Bowser, Chairperson Cheh, this Committee and the Council for your support and I thank the public for their patience and understanding. I also thank Team DMV for their extraordinary

commitment to keeping the City and our residents safe and moving throughout the current public health emergency.