

## **Motor Vehicle Division Informational Memo # 20-21**

### ***2020 Legislation – Hard-of-hearing language changes***

**DATE:** June 30, 2020

**FROM:** Kathleen Meradith-Eyers, Compliance Officer, DIS

**TO:** All Driver and Identification Services staff, Iowa County Treasurers and County Treasurer's staff that issue driver's licenses and non-operator's identification cards

#### **SUBJECT**

This informational memo explains a bill enacted during the 2020 legislative session which updates language throughout Iowa Code and administrative rules regarding the terms "deaf" and "hearing impaired".

#### **SUMMARY**

House File 2585 replaces the term "hearing impaired" with the term "hard-of-hearing" throughout Iowa Code and administrative rules, and makes corresponding terminology changes regarding individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Several sections of Iowa Code that pertain to the DOT currently use the term "hearing impaired," and with the passage of this bill, these references will be changed to "hard-of-hearing," however, there will not be any impact to the MVD due to changes in Iowa Code.

Additionally, several chapters of DOT administrative rules also use the term "hearing impaired." Accordingly, as directed by the bill, chapter 605 (license issuance) and chapter 630 (nonoperator's identification) will be updated with the appropriate terminology. This will impact our issuance of driver's licenses and nonoperator's identification cards, in that we currently allow the option for a person to indicate on the face of the license that they are hearing impaired. Due to this legislative change, the indicator will be changed from "hearing impaired" to "hard-of-hearing."

**The legislation is effective July 1, 2020.**

#### **LINK TO LEGISLATION**

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/LGE/88/HF2585.pdf>

#### **CURRENT**

Under current law and administrative rules, a customer may request a designation on their DL or ID to say either "Deaf: Y" or "Hearing Imp: Y." Additionally, if designated on their DL or ID, this information is communicated to the database law enforcement uses to query a person's driving record during a traffic stop.

#### **NEW**

Nothing is changing regarding the actual issuance process for customers who request a "deaf" designation on their DL or ID, however, the option to indicate "hearing impaired" will now be replaced

with the term “hard-of-hearing,” and the information will continue to be transmitted to the law enforcement database used to query a person’s driving record.

### **BUSINESS IMPACT**

Because this legislation was passed and will be effective with very little advanced notice, we are still in process of completing the programming changes to update the language of the “hearing impaired” indicator in ARTS as well as on the face of the license. Until programming is completed, you should continue to add the “hearing impaired” indicator to a person’s driver’s license or ID upon request. When programming efforts are complete, the process to add the “hard-of-hearing” indicator will be the same as the current process to add an optional DL or ID designation.

### **HELPFUL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

The following questions and answers provide additional information that will be helpful to you and to customers.

#### **WHY IS THE CHANGE BEING MADE?**

There is a national movement to eliminate the term “hearing impaired” and replace it with “hard of hearing”, as the latter term is offensive to many in the deaf community. The term focuses on what people can’t do. It establishes the standard as “hearing” and anything different as “impaired,” or substandard, hindered, or damaged. It implies that something is not as it should be and ought to be fixed if possible.

#### **WHEN WILL THE UPDATED HARD-OF-HEARING INDICATOR BE AVAILABLE?**

We are currently working with our card vendor, Idemia, to complete the changes to the DL/ID design to add this indicator. When complete, we will share more information about how the indicator will look. Since this indicator is already available, but the language is simply being updated, it will likely remain in the same location on the printed card.

#### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF A PERSON CURRENTLY HAS A “HEARING IMPAIRED” INDICATOR, ONCE THE LANGUAGE OF THE CURRENT INDICATOR IS CHANGED?**

If a person currently has a “hearing impaired” indicator on their driver’s license or ID, it will be switched to say “hard of hearing” on their first plastic card issued following completion of the programming changes and card redesign.

#### **WILL THIS OPTION BE AVAILABLE TO ADD DURING KIOSK OR MYMVD TRANSACTIONS?**

Yes. Customers currently can choose to add the “hearing impaired” indicator on their license or ID during an online myMVD or self-service kiosk issuance transaction. Once the programming and card design changes are complete, they will instead be able to add the “hard-of-hearing” indicator during a myMVD or kiosk transaction.