

Motor Vehicle Division Informational Memo # 20-25

2020 Legislation – Driver’s license validity and expiration for individuals age 72+

DATE: July 14, 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 that increases the upper age limit for full-term (eight-year) license issuance to age 72, rather than age 66 as in current law, and increases the upper age at which a full-term (eight-year) driver’s license must expire to age 80, rather than 74 as in current law.

SUMMARY

House File 2630 amends Iowa Code section 321.196 which governs the validity period for driver’s licenses. The bill increased the age limit at which a person can no longer receive a full-term eight-year license, so that drivers up to age 72 can be issued an eight-year license. Beyond age 72, licenses will be issued with decreasing validity periods up until age 78, at which a person can be issued a two-year license moving forward.

The legislation is effective September 1, 2020.

LINK TO LEGISLATION

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/LGE/88/HF2360.pdf>

CURRENT

Under current Iowa law, license validity period is tapered down beginning at age 66 to expire no later than the person’s 74th birthday. In other words, a license that has a validity of more than two years cannot currently exceed a person’s 74th birthday. Once reaching age 72, a person can be issued only a two-year license.

Age at issuance	Validity period
66	8 years
67	7 years
68	6 years
69	5 years
70	4 years
71	3 years
72 and older	2 years

NEW

The new law provides that driver’s license validity periods begin to taper down at age 72, to expire no later than the person’s 80th birthday. In other words, a license that has a validity of more than two years cannot exceed a person’s 80th birthday. Individuals will begin to be issued two-year licenses starting at age 78.

Age at issuance	Validity period
72	8 years
73	7 years

74	6 years
75	5 years
76	4 years
77	3 years
78 and older	2 years

BUSINESS IMPACT

Beginning September 1, 2020, the validity periods and expiration dates for individuals age 66 and older will be adjusted to the new validity structure, as indicated above. The changes will be automatically applied to ARTS issuance processes.

We will be updating our website and our service selector webpage to reflect the change in license validity and expiration periods once the new law takes effect on September 1, 2020.

HELPFUL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WILL THIS APPLY TO LICENSES WE'VE ALREADY ISSUED, OR JUST GOING FOWARD?

There will be no change for customers who already hold a driver's license, rather, the changes will apply only to new issuances going forward, including renewals and initial issuances. Thus, beginning September 1, 2020, a person age 72 who renews their license will receive an eight-year license, and a person age 78 or older will receive a two-year license.

Once this new law goes into effect, if a customer with a currently valid driver's license seeks a duplicate license prior to their renewal period, the duplicate issued will reflect their current expiration date (the expiration date will not be extended based on the new validity periods).

WILL CUSTOMERS AGE 70 AND OLDER NOW BE ABLE TO RENEW THEIR LICENSE ONLINE?

When this legislation becomes effective on September 1, 2020, there will be no immediate change to the age limits for using online and kiosk renewal services.

However, we will be reviewing our administrative rules, which currently set the age limit to allow an online renewal at 70 years old, to see if that age needs to be increased to align with the intent of the legislation.

WILL THIS APPLY TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES?

Yes, this bill applies to the validity periods and expiration dates of all driver's licenses, both commercial and noncommercial.

WILL THIS HAVE A NEGATIVE SAFETY IMPACT?

Although this law will result in longer periods without seeing individuals between ages 67 and 78 for in-person renewal, it does not impact our authority to issue shorter term licenses for specific medical conditions, to require a line examination based on observations that a licensee may not be physically capable to drive, or to re-examine a person's driving ability following certain contributive crashes or requests from peace officers and medical professionals. It is critical that we continue to assess the fitness of all drivers regardless of age during every in-person transaction so that we license only qualified and capable drivers.