



Nick Jordan, Secretary
Jeannine Koranda, P.I.O.

Sam Brownback, Governor

Kansas takes major steps to improve the driver's license experience

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TOPEKA – To improve customer service, the state is implementing permanent Monday hours in five of its busiest driver licensing offices starting Sept. 9.

The scheduling change follows the second year of eight successful weeks with summer Monday hours in two state offices. This year, 5,365 customers came through the Mission and Wichita offices between July 8 and Aug. 19.

Since 1984, Kansas state-run driver licensing offices have been open Tuesday through Friday. “Monday hours have proved popular and beneficial for customers at our busiest offices, which is why we are expanding to more offices and making Monday hours year-round,” said Director of Vehicles Donna Shelite.

In addition to the normal influx of approximately 35,000 teenage drivers who visit state driver licensing offices every summer, state offices have seen the number of people coming in for concealed carry licenses more than triple. From January through July of this year, state driver licensing offices have processed 23,138 new or renewing concealed carry license transactions compared to 7,042 during the same seven months in 2012, and 16,541 for the whole year.

The Monday after Labor Day weekend, the state offices in Wichita, Andover, Topeka, Mission and Olathe will be open Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Road testing will not begin after 4 p.m.

“These offices are the busiest in the state, and in growing communities. We are optimistic this will help decrease wait times throughout the week,” Shelite said.

To help accommodate the additional hours, the state is also hiring additional staff. A planned second office in Derby at Bristol Square Shopping Center, 620 N. Rock Road, Suite 300, will also be open Monday through Friday this fall.

Despite being the state's second largest county home to more than half a million people, Sedgwick County has had only one driver licensing office since an office closed in 2003 and all driver's license services for the county were consolidated to the current Twin Lakes site.

The department is also beginning an evening hours pilot program this fall at the Mission and Olathe driver licensing offices. The offices will both be open until 7:45 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

“If evening hours prove as popular as Monday hours did, we will be looking at extending our operations at more sites for customers’ convenience,” Shelite said.

To help manage the lines at the state’s largest offices, the Kansas Department of Revenue has also installed a line management system that allows people to secure a place in line without first coming into the office.

To join the line people can use their cell phone to text 714-333-1234 or 626-609-1234 with Mission DL, Olathe DL, Topeka DL, Andover DL, Manhattan DL or Wichita DL. They can also sign in online from a web browser from <http://ksrevenue.org/qless.html>.

Once they have a place in line, people can roam freely while they wait, allowing them to stay at work or run errands instead of having to sit and wait in the office. The system will send them updates via text alerting them as their number progresses to the front of the line.