



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding Secretary of State services during the coronavirus outbreak

To slow the spread of the coronavirus, all Secretary of State offices are temporarily closed as of Tuesday, March 24, until further notice. In coordination with Governor Whitmer's administration, we will continue to rely on the guidance of public health officials to determine when we can reopen Secretary of State offices. Many transactions can be completed without a branch visit by going online. Late fees will be waived during this period.

Below are answers to Frequently Asked Questions regarding access to Secretary of State services during the coronavirus outbreak.

- **What services are available during the temporary closure of Secretary of State offices?**
Customers can still complete certain transactions online at Michigan.gov/ExpressSOS, although processing may be delayed. All transactions that cannot ordinarily be completed online will be temporarily suspended.
- **When will Secretary of State offices reopen?**
All Secretary of State offices will be closed through the duration of Governor Whitmer's [Stay Home, Stay Safe Executive Order](#). Customers should anticipate branch offices will not be reopened prior to April 23. Secretary Benson and her administration will continue to work with Governor Whitmer's administration to monitor public health across the state in order to determine when we can reopen branch offices.
- **How can I contact the Michigan Department of State during the office closures?**
Customers may contact the Michigan Department of State by calling 888-SOS-MICH or visiting Michigan.gov/ContactSOS. Our department cautions customers that we may not be able to respond to all inquiries due to the high volume of communications and limitations placed on staffing during this time.
- **How can I complete my transaction while offices are closed?**
Many transactions can be completed without a branch visit by going online to Michigan.gov/ExpressSOS. Processing of all transactions that cannot ordinarily be completed online will be temporarily suspended.

- **Will appointments still be honored?**

All appointments previously scheduled to take place during the temporary closure have been canceled. Customers whose appointments were impacted by the cancellation were sent an email with instructions for rescheduling.

Customers who did not receive this email and have a transaction that must be completed in person are advised to reschedule their appointment by visiting Michigan.gov/SOSAppointments or calling 888-SOS-MICH. Please note, **future appointments scheduled are subject to cancellation** as we continue to monitor public health.

- **Can I still complete my transaction by mail during the temporary closure?**

No, transactions cannot be completed by mail during the temporary Secretary of State office closure. **Please do not attempt to complete your transaction by mail during this period.** Your transaction will not be processed while our offices are closed and may be delayed once offices are reopened.

Transactions mailed before the closure will be processed when mail operations resume.

- **Will expiration dates be extended for driver's licenses, state identification cards and vehicle registrations?**

Our department continues to work with Governor Whitmer's administration to explore the option for extending expiration dates for state identification, vehicle registrations and other vital documents obtained through the Michigan Department of State.

While we are bound by state law and cannot currently provide extensions, **our department has waived late fees during this time.** We have notified the Michigan State Police that our offices are closed and asked them to notify local law enforcement agencies across the state **and exercise discretion** as this may impact drivers' ability to update their licenses and vehicle registration.

- **Will late fees be waived during the Secretary of State office closures?**

Yes, our department has waived late fees during this time, going back to March 13.

- **Has the Michigan Department of State coordinated with law enforcement regarding office closures?**

Yes, we have notified the Michigan State Police that our offices are closed and asked them to notify local law enforcement agencies across the state **and exercise discretion** as this may impact drivers' ability to update their licenses and vehicle registration.

- **My license and/or registration is now expired and I was unable to renew due to the branch office closure. What happens if I am pulled over for a traffic violation?**

This is up to the discretion of law enforcement. As the Michigan Department of State is not a law enforcement agency, we cannot speak for law enforcement on this issue, however, we have notified the Michigan State Police that our offices are closed and asked them to notify local law enforcement agencies across the state **and exercise discretion** as this may impact drivers' ability to update their licenses and vehicle registration.

If you have significant concerns with this, we recommend contacting your local law enforcement agency at their non-emergency number for further guidance.

- **My job requires that I have an up-to-date license/state-issued identification card/vehicle registration/etc. How can I renew these items if I am unable to do so online, but need to do so to conduct my work?**

During the temporary closure, the Michigan Department of State is only permitted to conduct emergency transactions for those who support services **necessary for sustaining life** during the coronavirus outbreak.

If you or your employer believes your work falls into this category, we ask that you contact your industry's professional association and ask them to contact us with your needs and any other such needs from your sector. Our department will review and process only emergency transactions from these professional industry associations that clearly articulate their employee(s) need for our credential to work in a critical infrastructure sector to sustain life during the Stay Home order.

- **How can I renew my commercial driver's license (CDL) during temporary office closures?**

During the temporary closure, CDL renewals will be exclusively limited to those who transport goods and services **necessary for sustaining life** during the coronavirus outbreak.

If you or your employer believes your work falls into this category, we ask that you contact your industry's professional association and ask them to contact us with your needs and any other such needs from your sector. Our department will review and process only emergency transactions from these professional industry associations that clearly articulate their employee(s) need for our credential to work in a critical infrastructure sector to sustain life during the Stay Home order.

Additionally, we have notified the Michigan State Police that our offices are closed and asked them to notify local law enforcement agencies across the state **and exercise discretion** as this may impact drivers' ability to update their licenses and vehicle registration. Our department has also waived late fees during this time.

- **How will dealers complete business during the temporary closure?**
During the temporary closure, dealer work will be exclusively limited to transactions necessary for supporting critical infrastructure or health and safety during the coronavirus outbreak. Those who are still unclear as to how to complete dealer transactions during the temporary closure should contact Michigan.gov/ContactSOS and select “Dealers, Mechanics & Repair Facilities” from the list of topics.
- **Will requests for driver or vehicle records be processed during the temporary office closure?**
No, driver and vehicle record requests will not be processed during the temporary office closure.
- **How will disability parking placard applications and renewal requests be processed during the temporary office closure?**
We have temporarily suspended processing for disability parking placard applications and renewals due to our inability to receive and/or send mail while our offices are closed.
- **How will the temporary closure impact services for out-of-state residents?**
We have temporarily suspended processing of out-of-state resident transactions through our Special Services Branch office due to our inability to receive and/or send mail while our offices are closed. Many transactions can still be completed online, and we advise those who are eligible to complete their business online to do so.
- **How will the temporary closure impact reinstatement hearings and driver assessments?**
All driver assessment and license reinstatement hearings through the Office of Hearings and Administrative Oversight will be postponed until further notice during the temporary office closure.

Those who receive a Notice to Appear by mail instructing them to appear for a hearing during the effective period of the Stay Home Executive Order can disregard the request and should not appear for their hearing or assessment on the listed date. Once our department is able to continue conducting in-person hearings and assessments, those who received a notice to appear during the temporary closure will be sent a new notice with information regarding their rescheduled hearing.

Drivers who may be impacted by changes to hearing and driver assessment schedules during this time are advised to **routinely check the [Michigan Department of State website](https://Michigan.gov) for updates** on when hearings will be set to resume.

Additionally, certain services for driver license appeal hearings can still be accessed online through the [Drive Appeal Integrated System \(DAIS\)](https://Michigan.gov/DAIS).

- **How will the temporary closure impact the REAL ID compliance deadline?**
During the temporary office closure, the Michigan Department of State will not be able to process requests for standard licenses to be made REAL ID compliant. Secretary Benson has vocalized her support for [bipartisan legislation cosponsored by Senator Gary Peters](#) to extend the REAL ID deadline by one year, until October 1, 2021, to protect public health by reducing the need for in-person visits to motor vehicle agencies.
- **How will the inability to renew a driver's license in person impact air travel and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) requirements?**
The federal Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has issued guidelines for individuals who plan to travel by air whose state-issued identification expired on or after March 1, 2020. Please visit [TSA.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.tsa.gov/coronavirus) for more information.
- **How will the inability to renew a driver's license or temporary license plates in person impact interstate travel?**
Interstate travelers questioned by non-Michigan law enforcement should explain that our offices are closed and/or show them our notification of this at [Michigan.gov/SOS](https://www.michigan.gov/SOS).
- **Will local elections still be held during the coronavirus outbreak?**
Many jurisdictions have decided to postpone their May election to August. For those that did not or could not, Secretary Benson and local election clerks across the state are planning to carry out the May election by mailing all registered voters in the election districts an application to vote by mail (absentee). This is the optimal and safest way to participate in our democracy at this time.

The application will come with a postage-paid return envelope. If the voter applies for a vote by mail/absent voter ballot, that will also arrive with a postage-paid return envelope. More information will be made available on the [Michigan.gov/SOS](https://www.michigan.gov/SOS) website as these decisions are made.