

DHSMV, having good cause, may require a licensed driver to submit to an examination or reexamination. "Good cause" includes, but is not limited to, the recommendation from a court, a law enforcement agency, or a physician.

A licensee may also be subject to reexamination by the DHSMV upon renewal. The examination consists of tests of the licensee's eyesight and hearing and his or her ability to read and understand highway signs and pavement markings.

Driver's License Issuance Periods

Generally, an initial driver license issuance is valid for 6 years, concurrent with the applicant's birthday. (If an applicant establishes his or her identity for a driver's license using either an employment authorization card or a proof of nonimmigrant classification both of which are issued by the United States Department of Justice, then the driver's license shall expire 4 years after the date of issuance or upon the expiration date cited on the United States Department of Justice documents, whichever date first occurs.)

A renewal driver's license is valid for 4 years. However, if the applicant's driving record includes no convictions for the preceding 3 years or no revocations, disqualifications, or suspensions over the preceding 7 years, the renewal driver's license is valid for 6 years.

Currently, the DHSMV may issue 4-year and 6-year license extensions by mail, electronic, or telephonic means without reexamination, unless renewal applicants are directed by the DHSMV to appear for an in-person examination. Licensed drivers are eligible for two consecutive license extensions without a required examination by the DHSMV. Therefore, the maximum time from the original driver license issuance to the end of the second license renewal could be 18 years (6 year original license and 2 mail-in renewal periods of 6 years each equaling 18 years.)

Driver's License Fees

The fee for an original operator's (class D) driver's license is \$20 and the fee for renewal or extension is \$15. The renewal fee is applicable for both a 4 and 6-year license. Driver license fees are deposited into the General Revenue Fund.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The CS amends s. 322.18, F.S., and modifies driver's license laws by requiring a licensee who is otherwise eligible for a renewal license and who is over 79 years of age to: (1) submit to and pass a vision test administered at any driver's license office; or (2) if applying for an extension by mail, then submit to a vision test administered by a licensed physician, optometrist, or optician who must send the results of the test to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) via electronic means as approved by DHSMV, or on the proper DHSMV form signed by the physician, optometrist, or optician, and meet vision standards equivalent to DHSMV's vision test. The CS further modifies driver's license laws to prohibit a licensee who is over 79 years of age from submitting an application for extension by electronic or telephonic means.

The CS also requires the DHSMV to study the effects of aging on driving ability. Issues to be addressed in the study include:

1. Effective and efficient identification of drivers at risk of being involved in a motor vehicle accident because functional limitations that effect their driving ability;
2. Prevalence and effect of degenerative processes affecting vision, mobility, cognitive functions and reaction time;
3. Implementation and effect of DHSMV's vision screening requirements and examination of new technologies;
4. Availability and effectiveness of remedial measures such as skills training, adaptive equipment, physical therapy and adjustment of driving practices that will allow people to drive safely for as long as possible;
5. Availability of alternative forms of transportation for people who can no longer safely drive; and the
6. Effectiveness of existing public education initiatives relating to at-risk drivers.

The CS requires DHSMV to report the results of the study, including findings and recommendations, to the Legislature by February 1, 2004. The CS requires DHSMV to appoint the Florida At-Risk Driver Council to participate in the study and to advise DHSMV on issues related to older at-risk drivers. Members of the council must include representatives or organizations involved with issues facing older drivers including state agencies, medical professionals, senior citizen advocacy groups, providers of services to senior citizens, and research entities.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. Other Constitutional Issues:

Classifications based upon age must be rationally related to furthering the state's legitimate interests.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Those persons over 79 years of age who elect to pay for a physician to perform the vision test may be impacted. The chart below provides the DHSMV’s anticipated renewals beginning July 1, 2003 for drivers over 79 years of age:

License expires July 1, 2003 or after. Over age 79 at time of expiration.	
Year	Renewals
2003	Over 210,000
2004	Over 216,000
2005	Over 183,000
2006	Over 162,000

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles estimates an insignificant fiscal impact of \$3,240 for programming modifications. The CS would impact driver license offices to the extent those persons over 79 years of age would elect to choose the “free” vision test provided at these offices, and would require DHSMV to screen vision reports from physicians, prepare correspondence to add restrictions, direct drivers for re-testing and log follow-up reviews, and respond to additional telephone inquiries; however, the DHSMV would absorb the additional workload without incurring additional costs.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.