

**Date:** January 24, 2025  
**Bulletin:** Driving School Owners and Operators  
**From:** Business Licensing and Compliance Division  
**RE:** Driver Education Association December 19, 2024, Meeting Overview

## Purpose

Below is a listing of the items discussed in the December 19, 2024, meeting with DEAM and MPDEA representatives, two representatives of the driver education industry who are not associated with either association, and MVA representatives. This reflects the topic of discussion and any outcome of those discussions.

## Summary

### Agenda Item 1: 18-Week Compliance

- Steps implemented by MVA to assure regulatory compliance and to address and resolve violations.
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  - Data collected indicates the potential for exceeding the 18-week requirement based on the school's current operational performance.
  - Audits of school records will be required to establish non-compliance. That process has been initiated.
- Has the non-compliance process been fully implemented and how many schools have been sanctioned?
  - To date, no administrative action has been issued for non-compliance.
  - Numerous conferences have been conducted and fines imposed for failure to provide data as required.
  - Audits have been initiated.
  - A proposal to complete DE- 003 forms within the e-services portal was discussed. This would increase the accuracy of the data.
    - Several attendees expressed concern that this process would create additional work for the driving schools.
    - Several other members expressed the need for driving schools to progress as technology progresses.
- Intent of the DE-157 Student Request to Exceed 18-week Completion Requirement form.
  - Regulations direct that exceeding the 18-week requirement can only be done at the student's request. The form provides schools with a uniform method for documenting those requests. It also provides a method for documenting the school's attempt to reach out to students failing to contact the school.

- This form also provides the opportunity to document how many students delay starting BTW due to not obtaining their learner's permits due to not yet meeting the age requirement, or for any other reason.
- This form is not mandatory. This is an option to assist each school with maintaining up to date records for students requesting additional time and the efforts the school took to reach out to each student to ensure they are attempting to comply with the 18-week regulation.

## **Agenda Item 2: Industrywide Notification and clarity on policies**

- The MVA was asked to respond to the topics listed below.
  - Uniform Pricing Mandates-
    - The MVA does not set the fees schools charge. Fees are at the discretion of the driving school, but there must be consistency between the fee schedules and the refund policies.
  - Cancellation Policies/Fees-
    - The MVA does not question cancellation policies and associated fees. The MVA encouraged schools to consider the lack of compensation to a student when the school fails to meet its obligations without notice, while the school assesses a cancellation fee to students who cancel on short notice.
  - Program Completion Deadlines-
    - The only deadlines are: (1) program completion within 18 weeks (unless a student requests otherwise in writing) and (2) retention of records for 3 years. Schools should keep in mind that if a student withdraws within the 3-year period, they are entitled to a prorated refund.
  - Minimum Session Time for Extra BTW Sessions-
    - There is no minimum time for extra BTW sessions.

## **Agenda Item 3: Unauthorized Private Lessons**

- The process for reporting unlicensed individuals providing driving instruction. The example provided by the Associations - Encore Driving Coach.
  - Business Licensing and Compliance Division has authority over issued professional licenses and certifications only.
  - The operation of an unlicensed driving school is a violation of the Transportation Article of the Maryland Code and is a criminal offense. This is outside the realm of authority of our division.
  - Violations of this type should be reported to the Investigations Division of the MVA.

## **Agenda Item 4: Survey on Retiring Training Vehicles/Vehicle Age**

- The MVA is actively pursuing changing the regulations from 7-model years to 8-model years with the continuance of annual state inspections.
- This change will not be effective until the regulations are changed.

## **Agenda Item 5: Standardized Instructor Training Curriculum Working Group**

- The current working group is revising the driver education curriculum, not the instructor training process. The instructor training process, including the Apprentice Instructor process, is slated for review in 2025.

- All 10 units of the driver education curriculum have been thoroughly reviewed and updated and are undergoing final enhancements. The anticipated completion date is mid-late February 2025.
- After completion, the curriculum will go through plain language review and translation.
- Concern was expressed regarding not having a professional third party involved in the curriculum rewrite.
  - The entire curriculum will be reviewed by professionals in our organizational development division.
- The MVA is obtaining content and images from the driver's manual and other MVA resources for use in the curriculum.

#### **Agenda Item 6: Document Handling at Branch Offices**

- It was reported that there have been changes at the branch office regarding the handling of the documented 60 practice hours and the mentor certifications page.
  - There have been no changes to these procedures. Any noted deviations from standard procedure should be immediately reported to the Branch Manager.
  - We can pursue reminding branches regarding this procedure.
  - Other recurring issues at branch offices can also be communicated to our Driver Services Division. The Division Manager is Derrick Keiser.

#### **Agenda Item 7: Online Access to Association Meetings**

- It was suggested that the MVA consider conducting these meetings in a secure online platform to allow attendance by all schools for observation only. Similar to how legislation is viewed during session.
  - The attendance at these meetings has included representatives from each association and representatives from schools not associated with either association to promote a constructive and collaborative atmosphere. The MVA asks the meeting attendees to share meeting highlights with their membership and shares its meeting summary with the industry.
  - The request at this time, is not currently an option.
  - These are not a public meetings/forum.

#### **Agenda Item 8: 3 Hour Alcohol and Drug Education Program**

- Participants now being required to score an 80% on the final test.
  - Yes, that is correct.

#### **Agenda Item 9: Advanced Instructor Trainer List**

- Has the AIT list been updated?
  - Yes

#### **Agenda Item 10: 3 Hour ADEP Survey**

- Expansion of subject matter in curriculum
  - Legislation will be introduced to possibly allow this expansion ([HB0463](#) and [SB0471](#)).

If you have any questions, please contact us at 410-787-2952 or [mvabldisd@mdot.maryland.gov](mailto:mvabldisd@mdot.maryland.gov).