



ALEA Fact Sheet

## Driver License Operations

### Transition Team Findings

With the passage of legislation creating the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA), a transition team was established to plan and prepare for the merger of state law enforcement operations. Their mission was to review all operations and propose a more effective and efficient strategy to deliver its responsibilities. Part of this review included a complete review of all Alabama Driver License operations.

The transition team concluded that several areas could be improved within state Driver License operations:

- Too many sworn officers were performing non-sworn functions
- Old and often undependable equipment provided for a poor customer experience
- Wait times for service within offices could be very long depending on the office
- Staff levels at most facilities were operating at minimal or below minimal levels
- The fee for issuing a license or identification card did not offset operations' cost by a significant amount
- Modern technologies were underutilized or not even being used at all

### Improvements Implemented to Date

Even before the final transition in January, steps were implemented to allow citizens to make **online reservations** enabling them to have little or no wait for services. To date, 14 offices allow reservations, and scheduling for all offices will be available by the end of the year.

By the end of the summer, every ALEA and local office will have **new computer workstations, testing devices, cameras and other equipment**.

Shortly after the transition, ALEA **moved 25 Troopers** from the Driver License Division to Highway Patrol, thus improving our primary goal of increasing our sworn officer presence and better protecting our state's highways.

In an effort to recoup expenses and self-sustain operations as intended by the legislature, the cost of the Driver License was **adjusted** by \$12.75 per issuance to reduce the operating loss from 84% to 34%.

### New Online Services

Beginning immediately, ALEA will allow the online renewal and replacement of any driver license or ID card. Annually, across our state in ALEA Driver License Offices and local probate, licensing or revenue offices, citizens conduct approximately 1.6 million transactions by *physically visiting these locations*. By enabling these new online services, foot traffic could potentially be reduced by more than 78%.

#### 2014 Statewide Driver License

Including ALEA & local county offices

1,587,181	Total DL-related transactions
1,008,453 (78.7%)	In-person transactions that could be handled online

ALEA Driver License Offices perform more than 746,000 transactions, most of which are in-person services, such as testing and new license issuances; however, more than 160,000 transactions be could be moved to an online experience. Every citizen that moves to an online transaction will receive faster and more convenient service. And even if a person shows up at an office to do one of these transactions, our busiest offices now have a Citizen Services Kiosk allowing them to skip the line.



### Suspended Offices in Low Traffic Areas

Currently, across Alabama, ALEA operates 76 driver license offices, and local county probate, licensing and revenue offices maintain 122 locations for performing driver license-related services. After a detailed review of each of these locations, it was determined that 33 ALEA offices accounted for less than 5% of all ALEA operations (and only 2% if you factor in local county offices). Each of these 33 offices operate just a day or two a week and are in the same location as a local county office. Each of these offices require ALEA personnel to travel from a full time district office and set up equipment every time the doors open. In most instances, the facilities were not designed for such operations, customers have to wait in inconvenient spaces and the citizen's experience more often than not requires much patience.

On August 1, ALEA will suspend operations in these 33 offices in an effort to improve efficiency and customer service. In most cases, a full service ALEA Driver License Office is less than 45 miles away (& often much less). A citizen will be able to make a reservation, walk right in and be served. The staff that traveled to open the part-time offices will get to stay in the base offices and better serve the customers.

With the addition of online services, better equipment, reservations and more staff in full-service offices, the Alabama Citizen should be better served.

### 2014 Statistics

1,587,181	Total of All Statewide Driver License Transactions
1,249,065	Total of New, Renewal or Replaced Licenses & ID Cards
746,375	Total Transactions in ALEA Offices
36,855	Total Transactions in Suspended Offices
4.94%	Percentage of Transactions in Suspended Offices
1,008,453	Statewide Transactions that could be done Online

### Questions/Answers

#### 1. Why are you closing driver license offices?

*ALEA continues to examine the core responsibilities and business practices within the Driver License Division. Due to attrition over several years, fiscal inability to replace essential employees, and the total number of locations that ALEA serves the public, we recognized our only option is to properly staff the offices that see a higher volume of traffic. ALEA identified 33 offices that served the lowest volume of the overall operation. Satellite offices are staffed from our district offices and result in increased wait times for the citizen due to reduced staff. The suspension of certain satellite offices will allow district offices to be fully staffed, which will lessen wait times and increase the number of customers served.*

#### 2. Why are you suspending offices after the recent increase in driver license cost?

*The driver license cost increase is unrelated to the suspension of services at selected locations. The driver license system has reached a critical point relative to equipment age, lack of personnel and years of reduced budgets. These factors have forced ALEA to look for alternatives to recover operational costs. The suspension of services at these offices was based entirely upon insufficient staffing.*



**3. How much money will be saved by suspending operations in these 33 offices?**

*The costs savings are minimal and consist of personnel, technology and travel related expenses. Most part time offices are housed within a local county facility at no cost to ALEA. The decision to suspend services is based on insufficient manpower due to budget restraints and the inability to hire examiners. In order to provide more effective and efficient service at our larger offices, personnel in the satellite offices will be assigned to district offices.*

**4. What made you decide to suspend the offices now?**

*As attrition continues within the Driver License Division, paired with the inability to hire, we have seen an increase across the state of satellite offices that we must close daily with no notice to the public. We recognize this is an undue hardship for those travelling to obtain services only to find a location closed. We wanted a more efficient method of notifying the public of our office schedule. We are trying to deliver better services to our citizens while operating with a reduced budget.*

**5. What is the level of staffing for the ALEA exam offices?**

*Since 2009 ALEA has experienced a 22% reduction in examining personnel and an overall reduction of 36% in Driver License staff. Approximately 36 employees are necessary to properly staff the suspended offices. Of the 33 offices, 28 are open 1 day a week, 4 are open 2 days a week and one is open 2 days a month.*

**6. What criteria was used to determine which offices would be suspended?**

*The total number of transactions processed for calendar year 2014 were analyzed to determine which offices had the lowest volume. The offices which conducted less than 2000 transactions were selected to suspend operations. This represents less than 6 percent of transactions conducted statewide within ALEA offices.*

**7. How long will these offices suspend operations?**

*This has not been determined and depends largely on the ability to hire additional staff to replace the currently vacated positions as well as whether or not it makes good business sense to resume operations.*

**8. How many citizens will these suspensions affect?**

*An accurate number of citizens affected is not a tangible measurement due to several factors. First, a citizen can visit any licensing location within the state, not just the county of residence. Second, multiple transactions can be attributed to one citizen during each visit. Finally, there is a significant percentage that currently visit the affected offices that could receive service at the probate or license commissioner's office in their county of residence. What we can quantify is that in the 33 affected offices approximately 37,000 transactions were conducted in 2014.*

**9. How many of those transactions could have been performed online services or at a local county office?**

*Approximately 17% of the services performed last year in the suspended offices could be done online or at the local county office.*

**10. How will this affect the probate offices?**

*Local County Probate, Licensing and Revenue offices perform functions which are now available online. With the statewide announcement of online services it may reduce the foot traffic inside these local offices. It will in no way affect the income of the county offices as those funds are statutorily earmarked and will continue to be distributed exactly as it has in the past.*

**11. How many ALEA offices will remain open?**

*A total of 43 ALEA offices will remain open. 12 of these offices are district offices that perform most driver license transactions and provide online scheduling.*



12. How will the suspension of the services at these locations improve the efficiency of driver license operations?

*With increased staffing at the district offices, more citizens can be served.*

13. What current and future services or technology improvements do you have planned?

CURRENT

*We currently are testing a pilot program for CDL skills testing to help reduce the wait time for commercial drivers. We already have available the ability to perform an online renewal and replacements for driver license and ID card, purchase crash reports, and the ability to schedule an appointment for services at selected locations. The replacement of driver license issuance equipment will be completed by end of August.*

FUTURE

*After performance metrics are analyzed from the announcement of online services and the availability to schedule an appointment online, consideration will be given to expanding hours of operation. Future online services being researched are purchasing a driving record (MVR), expansion of locations for online scheduling, paying for reinstatement fees, change address information, scheduling a driver license hearing, and checking your driver license status. In addition, enhancements to the driver license system will see improvements to administratively remove restrictions on learner's permits and add vessel class to a current license holder without the citizen visiting an ALEA office.*

14. What would it take to reopen these offices?

*After performance metrics are analyzed from the announcement of online services and the availability to schedule an appointment online, and budgetary restraints lifted to allow hiring more staff, consideration might go toward re-opening some of the suspended offices that provide the most value to our citizens while supporting a good business model.*

15. How can citizens find out which offices have been suspended?

*They can visit [alrenewal.com](https://alrenewal.com) to see which offices have been closed, as well as schedule an appointment to receive service in 30 minutes or less at selected locations or simply perform a transaction from our online services.*

MEDIA QUESTIONS – PIO Provided

A. *How much money has been saved by closing these 33 offices?*

See IB Question 3

B. *Since you increased the cost of a DL to pay for the cost of producing a DL earlier this year, why are you now closing offices?*

See IB Question 2

C. *How much money has been made since the cost of the DL has been increased? What has this money been used for?*

See IB Question 2

D. *Why are you closing offices before the end of the 2015 fiscal year when the expenses for the 2015 fiscal year have already been budgeted for?*

See IB Question 4

E. *How many licenses are issued in each DL office you are closing?*

See IB Question 6

F. *How many hours per week were these offices you are closing opened for business?*

See IB Question 5

G. *How many employees staffed the offices you are closing?*

See IB Question 5

H. *If you are closing offices based purely on services rendered at these locations and the hours open per week for the locations were significantly less, then how is that a true comparison?*

See IB Question 6

I. *How much is paid on rent for these offices?*

See IB Question 3

J. *Is closing these offices before the special session a message aimed at certain legislators? Is this a political move?*

See IB Question 4

K. *How many sworn officers do you still have working in DL? What do these officers do?*

See IB Question 5

L. *What would it take to reopen these offices?*

See IB Question 14