Oregon DMV customers allowed to keep surrendered licenses

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Effective April 1, Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will allow customers to keep surrendered driver licenses, driver permits and identification cards when they receive an interim card or an applicant temporary permit at the DMV office. The surrendered card will be hole-punched to show invalidation, but people may carry the card as possible photo ID until the new card arrives in the mail. The Oregon Transportation Commission approved the administrative rule change today in its March meeting, allowing DMV to begin the new procedure on April 1. Since mid-2007, DMV produces and mails driver licenses, driver permits and ID cards from a central location, rather than issuing them at the field offices. This was the first step in enabling facial recognition checks of applicantsâ€™ photos against the entire database of DMV photos to detect identity theft and fraud. A customer who qualifies for Oregon driving privileges or an ID card receives a paper interim card to carry temporarily while waiting for the final card to arrive in the mail. It provides evidence of application and driving privileges, but is not intended to be a secure ID document. â€œNearly all of our customers receive their secure laminated cards within a few days,â€• DMV Administrator Tom McClellan said. â€œHowever, DMV has been keeping the expiring or out-of-state card, leaving many people without photo ID for routine purposes such as banking, shopping, traveling, or otherwise proving their age or identity.â€• The paper interim cardâ€™s primary purpose is to fulfill the state requirement that drivers carry their licenses at all times while driving. The interim cards are intentionally short-term documents that expire in 30 days and lack the security features of other Oregon cards. Some applicants do not pass the facial recognition check or are otherwise not eligible for driving privileges, so they arenâ€™t issued a secure plastic card from the central site. Law enforcement agencies can verify the information on interim cards electronically, so the cards serve their intended purpose. But some financial institutions, taverns, stores, airport security, and other government agencies require more than the paper interim card to prove identity or age. This causes people to carry additional documents or to delay their business or travel plans until they receive their final cards from DMV. Acceptance of the interim card also has been inconsistent, which has led to a few difficult situations for some people. â€œSome people told us that they had no problem getting on a plane in Oregon, but when they tried to come back to Oregon the airport in the other state would not accept their interim card,â€• McClellan said. In addition, Oregon has added proof of citizenship or lawful presence in the U.S., proof of full legal name, and electronic verification of Social Security numbers and immigration documents to its requirements for obtaining driving privileges and ID cards. Customers who need extra time to obtain documents to meet these new requirements often are eligible for temporary driving permits that are valid up to 90 days. These permits also use a short-term, paper format. â€œSince July, weâ€™ve had people going weeks with a temporary permit and no other form of photo ID,â€• McClellan said. â€œAfter checking with other states, weâ€™ve decided to punch a hole in the customerâ€™s old card and return it with the interim card or temporary permit.â€• Starting April 1, DMV will return each customerâ€™s prior card with an invalidating hole punched in it. This will provide them with another piece of photo ID to use with their interim card or temporary permit. â€œItâ€™s not a guarantee that businesses and government agencies will accept the two cards together, but it should help,â€• McClellan said. â€œWe surveyed 16 other states that use interim cards and all but one return a hole-punched card.â€• The new policy will apply to expiring Oregon driver licenses and ID cards that residents turn in, and to cards from other states, U.S. territories and Canadian provinces that are given up by new Oregon residents. Driver licenses from outside the U.S., except for Canada, will be viewed by DMV and returned without invalidating them, as is done today. Applicants will be instructed to destroy or shred both their old card and interim card when they receive their new secure Oregon card in the mail. This is important to keep invalid cards out of circulation, but also to reduce the risk of identity theft and to avoid violating the law with respect to possessing only one driver license or ID card.