

COMMISSION ON ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION
February 1, 2012, 11:30 a.m.; Roughrider Room

North Dakota Department of Transportation
Linda Butts, Deputy Director for Driver and Vehicle Services

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the commission. I'm Linda Butts, Deputy Director for Driver and Vehicle Services at the North Dakota Department of Transportation. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present information to you today.

When we were contacted by John Bjornson, we pulled our statistics and determined in 2008 there were 4,450 Driving Under Suspension (DUS)/Driving Under Revocation (DUR convictions; in 2009, 4246; 2010, 4164; and 2011, 4073. This equates to a decline of 377 over the past four years.

We have researched how individuals who are arrested for subsequent violations of DUS can receive a Temporary Restricted License (TRL) often referred to as a work permit, for use during their period of suspension until their full driving privileges are restored. Department TRL issuance policy is driven from statute. The most pertinent statutes directly affecting our policy are, but not limited to the following sections of statute.

- NDCC 39-06-42. Penalty for driving while license suspended or revoked.
- NDCC 39-06-43. Extension of license suspension or revocation.
- NDCC 39-06-17.5 Restricted licenses—Penalty for violation.
- NDCC 39-06.1-05. Offenses excepted.
- NDCC 39-06.1-11. Temporary restricted license—Ignition interlock device.

Because the violation of DUS is a criminal violation, it limits the director's ability to issue a TRL. In the process of issuing a TRL we ask multiple questions and review the entire driving record of the individual. This review considers items such as,

- Amount of time violation free,
- Violation of a previously issued TRL,
- Number and severity of traffic violations.

If the individual has two or more criminal traffic convictions within the previous 36 months including the current offense, a TRL cannot be issued. While there are other limitations and process steps, each specific situation is unique. However, if the statute clarified that if the individual only has a DUS as the sole violation in the proceeding timeframe a TRL could be processed, this may provide some relief for this situation.

We would not advocate changing the process for other criminal traffic violations or circumstances that could occur in addition to, leading to, or as a consequence of DUS. In these cases the current process for TRL's appear to be satisfactory. Additionally, this would not affect commercial driving licenses, which are controlled by federal regulation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to answer any questions.

NDCC 39-06-42. Penalty for driving while license suspended or revoked.

1. Except as provided in section 39-06.1-11, any person who drives a motor vehicle on a highway or on public or private areas to which the public has a right of access for vehicular use in this state while that person's license or privilege so to do is suspended or revoked in any jurisdiction is guilty of a class B misdemeanor for the first, second, or third offense within a five-year period. Any subsequent offense within the same five-year period is a class A misdemeanor.

2. If the suspension or revocation was imposed for violation of section 39-08-01 or equivalent ordinance or was governed by section 39-06-31 or chapter 39-20, the sentence must be at least four consecutive days' imprisonment and such fine as the court deems proper. The execution of sentence may not be suspended or the imposition of sentence deferred under subsection 3 or 4 of section 12.1-32-02. Forfeiture of bail is not permitted in lieu of the defendant's personal appearance in open court for arraignment on a charge under this subsection.

NDCC 39-06-43. Extension of license suspension or revocation.

The director upon receiving a record of the conviction of any person upon a charge of driving a vehicle while the license or driving privileges of the person were suspended shall extend the period of that suspension for an additional:

1. Like period not to exceed ninety days if the operator's record for the three years preceding the most recent violation of section 39-06-42 or equivalent ordinance shows the person's operator's license or privilege has not been suspended, revoked, or denied for a prior violation of section 39-06-42 or equivalent ordinance;

2. One hundred eighty days if the operator's record for the three years preceding the most recent violation of section 39-06-42 or equivalent ordinance shows the person's operator's license or privilege has been once suspended, revoked, or denied for a prior violation of section 39-06-42 or equivalent ordinance; or

3. One year if the operator's record for the three-year period preceding the most recent violation of section 39-06-42 or equivalent ordinance shows the person's operator's license or privilege has been at least twice suspended, revoked, or denied for a prior violation of section 39-06-42 or equivalent ordinance. If the original suspension was imposed for violation of section 39-08-01 or equivalent ordinance, the director shall extend the period of that suspension for at least six months. If the suspension of driving privileges resulted solely from failure to appear in court or to post and forfeit bond on noncriminal traffic violations, there may be no additional period of suspension. Suspension periods for failure to appear or to post and forfeit bond on noncriminal traffic violations may be for an indefinite duration. If the conviction was upon a charge of driving while a license or driving privileges were revoked, the director may not issue a new license for an additional period of one year from and after the date the person would otherwise have been entitled to apply for a new license. Upon a conviction of a person for violating a restricted license issued under section 39-06.1-11 and in which the underlying suspension was imposed for violating section 39-08-01 or equivalent ordinance or is governed by chapter 39-20, the director shall extend the period of the underlying suspension in accordance with subsection 5 of section 39-06-17.

NDCC 39-06-17.5 Restricted licenses - Penalty for violation.

5. It is a class B misdemeanor for any person to operate a motor vehicle in any manner in violation of the restrictions imposed in a restricted license issued to that person other than restrictions imposed under subsection 6. If the restricted license was issued under section 39-

06.1-11 and the underlying suspension was imposed for a violation of section 39-08-01 or equivalent ordinance, or is governed by chapter 39-20, punishment is as provided in subsection 2 of section 39-06-42 and upon receiving notice of the conviction the director shall revoke, without opportunity for hearing, the licensee's restricted license and shall extend the underlying suspension for a like period of not more than one year. The director may not issue a restricted license for the extended period of suspension imposed under this subsection. If the conviction referred to in this section is reversed by an appellate court, the director shall restore the person to the status held by the person prior to the conviction, including restoration of driving privileges if appropriate.

NDCC 39-06.1-05. Offenses excepted.

The procedures authorized under sections 39-06.1-02 and 39-06.1-03 may not be utilized by a person charged with one of the following offenses:

1. Driving or being in actual physical control of a vehicle in violation of section 39-08-01, or an equivalent ordinance.
2. Reckless driving or aggravated reckless driving in violation of section 39-08-03, or an equivalent ordinance.
3. A violation of chapter 12.1-16 resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle.
4. Leaving the scene of an accident in violation of section 39-08-04, 39-08-05, 39-08-07, or 39-08-08, or equivalent ordinances.
5. Driving while license or driving privilege is suspended or revoked in violation of section 39-06-42, or an equivalent ordinance.
6. Violating subdivision b or c of subsection 5 of section 39-24-09.
7. Operating a modified motor vehicle in violation of section 39-21-45.1.
8. Driving without liability insurance in violation of section 39-08-20.
9. Operating an unsafe vehicle in violation of subsection 2 of section 39-21-46.
10. Causing an accident with an authorized emergency vehicle or a vehicle operated by or under the control of the director used for maintaining the state highway system in violation of subsection 5 of section 39-10-26.

NDCC 39-06.1-11. Temporary restricted license - Ignition interlock device.

1. Except as provided under subsection 2, if the director has suspended a license under section 39-06.1-10 or has extended a suspension or revocation under section 39-06-43, upon receiving written application from the offender affected, the director may for good cause issue a temporary restricted operator's license valid for the remainder of the suspension period after seven days of the suspension period have passed.
2. If the director has suspended a license under chapter 39-20, or after a violation of section 39-08-01 or equivalent ordinance, upon written application of the offender the director may issue for good cause a temporary restricted license that takes effect after thirty days of the suspension have been served after a first offense under section 39-08-01 or chapter 39-20. The director may not issue a temporary restricted license to any offender whose operator's license has been revoked under section 39-20-04 or suspended upon a second or subsequent offense under section 39-08-01 or chapter 39-20, except that a temporary restricted license may be issued for good cause if the offender has not committed an offense for a period of two years before the date of the filing of a written application that must be accompanied by a report from an appropriate licensed addiction treatment program or if the offender is participating in the drug court program

and has not committed an offense for a period of three hundred sixty-five days before the date of the filing of a written application that must be accompanied by a recommendation from the district court. The director may conduct a hearing for the purposes of obtaining information, reports, and evaluations from courts, law enforcement, and citizens to determine the offender's conduct and driving behavior during the prerequisite period of time. The director may also require that an ignition interlock device be installed in the offender's vehicle.

3. The director may not issue a temporary restricted license for a period of license revocation or suspension imposed under subsection 5 of section 39-06-17 or section 39-06-31. A temporary restricted license may be issued for suspensions ordered under subsection 7 of section 39-06-32 if it could have been issued had the suspension resulted from in-state conduct.

4. A restricted license issued under this section is solely for the use of a motor vehicle during the licensee's normal working hours and may contain any other restrictions authorized by section 39-06-17. Violation of a restriction imposed according to this section is deemed a violation of section 39-06-17.

5. If an offender has been charged with, or convicted of, a second or subsequent violation of section 39-08-01 or equivalent ordinance and the offender's driver's license is not subject to an unrelated suspension or revocation, the director shall issue a temporary restricted driver's permit to the offender only for the purpose of participation in the twenty-four seven sobriety program upon submission of proof of financial responsibility and proof of participation in the program by the offender. If a court or the parole board finds that an offender has violated a condition of the twenty-four seven sobriety program, the court or parole board may order the temporary restricted driver's permit be revoked and take possession of the temporary restricted driver's permit. The court or the parole board shall send a copy of the order to the director who shall record the revocation of the temporary restricted driver's permit. Revocation of a temporary restricted driver's permit for violation of a condition of the twenty-four seven sobriety program does not preclude the offender's eligibility for a temporary restricted driver's license under any other provisions of this section.