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Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles  
Contact: Sunni Brown  
(804) 367-6834  
[Sunni.Brown@DMV.Virginia.gov](mailto:Sunni.Brown@DMV.Virginia.gov)  
Skype: Virginia.DMV\*

Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Contact: Leslie Prince  
(804) 662-9703  
[Leslie.Prince@vddhh.virginia.gov](mailto:Leslie.Prince@vddhh.virginia.gov)

## **Virginia DMV Partners with the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to Offer Tests in American Sign Language** *Partnership Could Benefit Thousands of Virginians*

RICHMOND – Through the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' (DMV) new testing system called SecuriTest, customers can complete knowledge exams in 16 different languages, now including American Sign Language (ASL).

Beginning last fall, SecuriTest replaced the agency's 20-year old testing system. The web-based application reduces the need for translators to assist customers in the testing process. DMV and the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) collaborated to begin offering DMV tests in ASL this month. A native ASL signer, who is a former teacher of the Deaf, translated more than 1,100 test questions for DMV's driver's license, motorcycle license, and commercial driver's license (CDL) exams.

For many individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, ASL is their first language, so offering DMV tests in ASL, as opposed to just reading the questions, allows them to receive the information in the language they prefer.

Before SecuriTest, a customer who wanted to take a test in ASL had to arrange for an interpreter ahead of time through VDDHH's Interpreter Service Program, which was not typically a same-day service. Now, those customers can walk in to any full service DMV office and take their test in ASL at a touch-screen kiosk; however, customers more comfortable using an ASL interpreter will still have the option of scheduling a qualified sign language interpreter.



“Virginia is one of the first states in the nation to offer DMV automated tests in American Sign Language, and we are so excited to partner with the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to make this testing option possible,” said DMV Commissioner Richard D. Holcomb. “We want all of our customers to be able to take their knowledge exams in the language in which they are most comfortable, and offering tests in ASL fulfills that goal.”

While statistics from VDDHH show that an average of two people were requesting interpreters to take DMV tests each month, many others may have benefitted from interpreter services to access the test in the appropriate language mode.

“We believe this increases the ease of access for people whose primary form of communication is ASL,” said Ronald Lanier, Director of VDDHH. “Partnering with DMV to offer this service will allow Virginians who are Deaf the same access to the testing process as Virginians who are hearing – the opportunity to walk into DMV on the date and at the time that they choose and take the test, rather than having to schedule the test time based on the availability of a sign language interpreter.”

SecuriTest offers DMV knowledge exams in ASL at all 75 brick and mortar DMV offices. Tests in ASL will be offered on DMV’s five mobile offices in the near future.

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*\*Virginia DMV is now on Skype, providing more on-camera interview opportunities for television stations outside of the Richmond market. Contact Sunni Brown for more information.*