

Western Cape takes licence test bookings to the next level

The National Traffic Information System (eNaTIS) licence appointment booking system, which was successfully launched in Mpumalanga in October this year, has now also been implemented in the Western Cape. The system, an integral component of the feature-rich eNaTIS, is a major improvement over the manual system previously used.

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Scheduling bookings manually is subject to human error, is not wholly effective and moreover presents ample opportunity for fraud and corruption. The new eNaTIS-linked booking system, which was launched at the Khayelitsha driving licence testing centre (which also services Lingelethu West) in the second week of December, has proved to be a highly effective and efficient replacement.

The eNaTIS booking system brings numerous advantages:

- It is integrated with related transactions on the eNaTIS, thus streamlining the learner's/driving licence process.
- It ensures that the available capacity in terms of driving licence testing centres and examiners is utilised optimally, thus going a long way towards alleviating the frustration currently experienced by members of the public.
- A transparent process is followed in allocating bookings.

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Fraud prevention is one of the main features of the system. Corrupt practices will be eliminated in the following ways:

- The availability of appointments is determined and managed by the eNaTIS. As a result officials at driving licence testing centres (DLTCs) will not be able to give preference to specific applicants by reserving appointment dates or times for them. The system determines the earliest available appointment date and time for an applicant. Unfortunately, in the past a few unscrupulous officials abused their position by accepting bribes to provide bookings to applicants. This will no longer be possible.

- The booking system calculates the number of available test appointments at any given DLTC based on the capacity of the centre in question. This capacity will be determined and set up by the Inspectorate of Driving Licences, and examiners will be unable to perform more tests than the number allowed.

- Information about examiners who will be conducting specific tests will not be available to applicants (and vice versa). Only on the day of the test will this information be made available. This will eliminate the abusive practice where certain applicants are tested by specific examiners who have been bribed to pass them.

- Anonymous applicants will not be able to make block bookings. This will prevent unscrupulous driving schools from bribing officials and ‘hogging’ test slots, even though they may not have applicants to fill those slots.
- The scheduled test times and dates are visible to the Inspectorate of Driving Licences and the Department of Transport’s Investigations and Forensics Sub-directorate. This will provide additional audit information on examiners and controls on applicants they have tested.
- It is not possible to capture test results or the issuing of a licence on the system if a test appointment was not made. In the past applicants were marked as having passed although an application for a test was never made.
- Diaries of examiners will be fully controlled by DLTC managers/supervisors. The additional management involvement will compel examiners and management to work together, thus improving accountability and also providing a structured work environment.
- Since the booking system does not allow the replacement of one applicant with another for a specific test, corrupt officials will no longer be able to do so in return for bribes.
- All booking transactions performed will be audited and available for management reports.

A dedicated project team will manage the rollout of the system in the Western Cape, and it will be implemented in Knysna early in 2008. Also scheduled for the beginning of next year is implementation at Mbombela, Mala and Nkomazi in Mpumalanga, where the system is already in operation at Witbank and Kriel. Initial training of Free State officials took place earlier this year, and it is envisaged that the booking system will be rolled out in that province during the course of next year.

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