



Hon Rita Saffioti BBus MLA

Minister for Transport; Planning; Ports

State Government takes action to improve PDA booking system

Thursday, 16 March 2023

- Government announces sweeping changes to PDA booking system
- Driving instructors will no longer be able to swap PDA bookings
- Extra security measures also implemented to combat use of bots to bulk book tests
- Government currently recruiting additional DoT driving assessors

Following several months of investigation into practices impacting the practical driving assessment (PDA) booking system, the State Government is taking action to provide fair and equitable access for all customers.

On 11 April, the Department of Transport (DoT) will switch off the function that allows authorised driving instructors to swap the PDA bookings of two already booked candidates.

Currently, authorised driving instructors in Western Australia can use candidates' drivers licence numbers to swap PDA bookings between candidates, without needing to cancel or reschedule the booking.

Switching off the function will clamp down on the small minority of driving instructors taking advantage of the system and give driving instructors who are representing a candidate the same rights as families or other candidates looking for a PDA booking. This will also bring WA into line with other state jurisdictions.

It is also expected the change will reduce the amount of tests that are being bulk booked, freeing up availability for all customers.

DoT will be advising driving instructors of the changes to the booking swap function. The ability to book, cancel and change an individual appointment will remain for all customers.

An evaluation of the impact of the decision to switch off the function will be undertaken after six months, and the Government will continue to look at options to improve the availability of PDA bookings.

DoT has also announced it will further enhance security on the PDA booking system to prevent the use of automated software applications known as bots to sweep the system for available bookings, which are then quickly booked in bulk, restricting fair access to tests for other customers.

This will see the current reCAPTCHA system on the booking system enhanced to determine that the user is a person and not a bot.

DoT is also recruiting more driving assessors with seven new assessors recently hired, and further recruitment to occur in April.

An education campaign will also be launched to remind learners and their parents or supervisors about the importance of being well prepared to undertake their driving tests.

The average pass rate across the metro area in the past two years has been 31 per cent.

More information on the learner driver journey can be found on the [DoT website](#).

Comments attributed to Transport Minister Rita Saffioti:

"For years, we have had a PDA booking system that allows driving instructors to swap PDA bookings among their clients, which many use responsibly and as intended.

"Unfortunately, there are a number of driving instructors abusing this privilege by bulk-booking PDAs with some even taking advantage of learners by charging a fee to access one of their bookings.

"Switching off the function not only means we clamp down on instructors gaming the system and trying to charge for tests, but it could also help free up more tests by removing their incentive to bulk-book.

"The enhanced reCAPTCHA process will also weed out the automated bots sweeping up bookings as they become available and communications to learners and their parents about only sitting their test when they are ready will also help in providing a fair system that meets the expectations of all customers and encourages better prepared and safer candidates."