



**The Office of the Official Opposition  
Free State Provincial Legislature**

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>21 January 2020</b>
<b>To:</b>	<b>Hon Sam Mashinini MPL MEC for Police, Roads and Transport Free State Provincial Government</b>
<b>From:</b>	<b>Roy Jankielsohn MPL Leader of the Official Opposition Free State Provincial Legislature</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public frustration over licensing and testing centres</b>

Dear MEC,

I hope this correspondence finds you in good health. May we wish you a prosperous 2021.

There is growing discontent and frustration among the public over the inadequate services and in many instances lack of services by the licencing offices and testing centres across the Free State. The most common complaints received from various offices across the Free State are the following:

- Offices are open for limited hours in the day and close at 12h00 for the public (sometimes even at 11h30).
- Offices run out of paper and other logistical supplies and are unable to supply certain services. Often people are only informed of this after queuing for a long time.
- In an instance the computers were stolen last year and the offices are still not open.
- People start queuing from early in the morning and are not served due to time constraints (early closures), logistical problems, or other issues.
- Some offices have closed due to theft of equipment or other reasons such as comorbidities of staff with no indication when they will open again.
- People travel from towns where services are not available only to be informed that they are unable to be served at offices in other towns.
- There are instances where staff are regarded by the public as being arrogant and rude, as if they doing people favours by working.
- Covid-19 or lack of municipal services such as water appear to common reasons for closing offices without informing the local communities of time frames for re-opening.



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- After the MEC made promises regarding online appointments for learner's and driver's licences during Covid-19 lockdown last year, this has not materialised.
- Operators of businesses requiring large numbers of licences (courier and transport services) are leaving the Free State due to the poor services.
- Offices that close for Covid-19 sanitation often take weeks to re-open.
- Certain services are only available on certain days and the public are only informed of this after queuing for long periods.
- Only a certain number of people are assisted in a day and people already in queues are told to leave before being assisted.

Most of the complaints above apply to a majority, if not all, licensing offices across the province. The Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown cannot be blamed for the poor services since the private sector (banks, supermarkets) and other services such as medical services continue to function for long hours during the day. Officials should be grateful they have jobs while many people in the private sector have lost theirs or forced to take pay cuts due to the economic implications of Covid-19 lockdowns and poor policy decisions. It remains unacceptable that this Department allows people to work half-days while there is a huge backlog for the services that is reaching crisis proportions.

I would like to suggest the following to mitigate the problem:

- An audit be carried out on offices in all towns to determine what is preventing them from delivering all the services required and that plans are implemented to mitigate the identified problems causing the backlogs and poor services.
- Offices should remain open to deliver all services until early evening to deal with backlogs have been dealt with.
- Staff should be informed to be courteous and efficient towards the public (their clients).
- Where the lack of municipal services such as water and electricity is an issue, then the Department must ensure that JoJo tanks and/or generators are available.
- Covid-19 sanitation should be done expeditiously and offices must re-open immediately afterwards.



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- Staff and services should be isolated with the necessary sanitation points so that only certain points are closed if a staff member is infected.
- Disciplinary steps must be taken against staff and managers where Covid-19 is used as a blatant excuse to close offices or where poor services are delivered.
- Notices should be displayed outside gates at offices informing the public of any issues that may prevent certain services with dates and times for the re-opening of such services. This must be done the day before so that people do not have to queue unnecessarily early in the morning.

I hope that this correspondence will encourage you to urgently interrogate these and other issues that you may identify and mitigate the problems in order to facilitate better services to the public who are held at ransom with timelines for legal compliance by the same government that is unable to deliver the services.

Yours truly,

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