

DRP amnesty deadline approaching quickly

Written by Betsy Blevins
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April 7, 2011 - The last day to apply for the Driver Responsibility Amnesty Program is approaching quickly. Eligible drivers have until Thursday, April 7 to sign up for the program that will allow them to pay only 10 percent of what they owe up to \$250 and reinstate their suspended driver licenses.

Thus far, only 13 percent of the 713,444 people who are eligible to participate in the DRP amnesty have signed up.

This one-time amnesty program applies to drivers who had a surcharge assessed between Sept. 30, 2004, and Dec. 31, 2008, and are delinquent on those payments. No other amnesties will be offered once the April 7 deadline expires.

Drivers are not required to make a payment when they sign up; however, they must pay off the total reduced amount owed by April 17, 2011, to retain their driving privileges. Failure to pay the reduced amount in full will result in the reinstatement of the total amount past due and the suspension of driving privileges.

To apply for the amnesty program, see the surcharge website at www.txsurchargeonline.com or call 1-877-207-3170. No requests will be accepted in person, by mail, e-mail, or fax.

Once the online or telephone application is approved, the surcharge suspensions will be cleared on the applicant's driving record within three business days. After the 3rd business day, the applicant can review the reduced amount and begin making the necessary payment of the reduced balance, which must be paid in full by April 17.

The Driver Responsibility Program, which assesses fees for a variety of driving-related offenses, was passed by the Legislature in 2003, and directed the Department of Public Safety to administer the program. Traffic offenses that carry an automatic surcharge for three years include DWI-related offenses, no insurance, driving while license suspended, driving without a license and point accumulation. For example, the fee for a first-time DWI offender is \$1,000 per year for three years. The revenue generated by DRP goes to trauma centers, emergency medical services, and the General Revenue Fund.