The Progression of the DVLA.docx

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The DVLA is now extremely well known all over the UK for everything to do with driving. Whether it be lessons, tests, vehicle registration, points or fines, the DVLA is contacted all day everyday by British road users, from the day they begin to drive, to the day they stop. But where did it all begin? The DVLA is now part of the UK government and stores all of the information of every single driver in Britain in a database. But has the world of driving always been centralised through the one organisation, or have things grouped together slowly over the years? Either way, the all-seeing all-knowing powers of the DVLA keep our roads safe and free of dangerous drivers. And here’s how it began.

Rather than being centralised, the DVLA’s system was originally the responsibility of local boroughs and councils, and rules were brought in under the motor car act of 1903. It wasn’t until 1965 that the licensing system was actually centralised. The DVLA (Driving and vehicle Licensing Agency), previously known as the DVLC (Driving and vehicle Licensing Centre) has always centralised its operations from its head office in Swansea. Previously, the DVLA had around 40 Local Network Offices all over the UK, which were places where new and current drivers could apply for licenses as well as pay their vehicle tax, but by 2013 these had all succumbed to the ever growing advances of technology, with just the head office in Swansea being the only DVLA office. Despite the job losses, the move was positive in saving money on resources as well as encouraging people to get online and apply for their licences from the website, as well as using the new EVL (Electronic Vehicle Licencing) to quickly tax their vehicle online. Despite progressing, the DVLA still does allow technophobes to tax their vehicle in participating post offices.

The DVLA has a number of responsibilities today and you will be in contact with them right from applying for your provisional licence and theory test, to handing over a licence that has expired and re-testing because you have reached seventy. The DVLA issues points and fines for reckless driving, and these are known as endorsements. Get a certain amount of endorsements on your licence in a certain space of time – you could risk being disqualified from driving for good. The DVLA is also the vehicle tax man, working with the police to electronically scan car number plates to check their road tax is in date, or ensuring a vehicle has been registered with a SORN if it is parked off road. If you lose your licence, or it becomes damaged or faulty, it is best to tell the DVLA as soon as possible so that they can register you with a new one (a small fee will apply). You are even obliged to notify the DVLA if you have a change in personal circumstances such as changing your name, address or gender (photo) so that these things can be updated on your photocard (licence).

All driving tests in the UK are administered by the DVLA. As soon as you know you want to take a driving test, you must book one online as the waiting list is often long. You cannot complete a driving test unless you have a provisional licence and have completed and passed your driving theory test. You will need to present this certificate when going for your driving test. The minimum age for driving tests of UK citizens is 17 years of age (16 for
motorbikes/mopeds). Compulsory testing for road users was brought in by the DVLA in 1934, with the computerised theory test being introduced in early 2000.