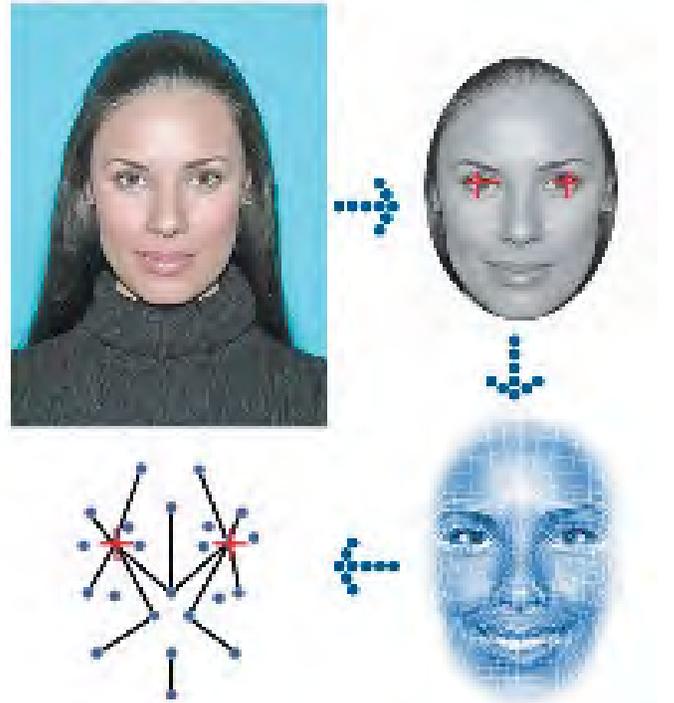# We're using facial recognition to protect your identity

The Department of Licensing (DOL) uses facial recognition as part of our ongoing efforts to prevent individuals from obtaining multiple licenses or ID cards or attempting to obtain a license or ID in the name of another Washington resident. DOL is committed to doing everything it can to combat identity theft and protect the identities of Washington residents.

How does the facial recognition system work?

Using your regular driver license or ID card photo, the system creates a digital template using a precise map of facial features that aren't easy to alter, such as eye sockets, cheekbones and sides of the mouth.

Before a new license is issued, the system compares the template it creates to all the templates currently in our database and determines if someone is applying for a license using a name other than their own. When mismatches are detected, the system flags them for review by specially-trained DOL staff.

DOL's facial recognition system is designed to be an accurate, non-obtrusive fraud detection tool. When staff investigators confirm an individual may have more than one identity in our system, DOL offers the individual an opportunity to explain at a hearing before any administrative action to suspend or cancel a license or ID card is taken.

Facial recognition templates are not shared

We do not share the use of the system with law enforcement or other agencies without a court order and do not release facial recognition system results. However, if our investigators find probable fraud or identity theft, we inform appropriate partner agencies who can investigate for identity-based crime or entitlement fraud.

dol.wa.gov