SPRING 2021
REACHING out

CHANGES TO VITAL RECORDS LAWS & RULES

ONLINE SERVICES

REAL ID 2021

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING
dol.wa.gov
Hello Community Partners,

On March 16, eight people were killed in three Asian-owned spas, including six women of Asian descent. Eight humans with hopes, dreams, aspirations, and loved ones:

Xiaojie Tan  
Daoyou Feng  
Paul Andre Michaels  
Delaina Ashley Yaun  
Soon Park  
Hyun Jung Grant  
Suncha Kim  
Yong Yue

This tragedy is part of rising cases of Asian-American hate crimes. But violence against Asian-Americans in the U.S. is not something new. We have an opportunity to create a new story. As an agency that has diversity, equity, and inclusion at our core, the Department of Licensing stands in solidarity with the Asian-American community who continue to experience fear and intimidation.
A message from
TERESA BERNTSEN

COVID PAST AND FUTURE

The Department of Licensing continues to strive to serve as many customers as safely as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. DOL closed its driver licensing offices on March 17, 2020. We began reopening offices in May by appointment only. Since then, we’ve learned many lessons about how we do business, how we can do business and how our customers want us to do business. All of these lessons will help us serve you better in the future.

A year later, we’ve reopened 37 driver license servicing offices and will reopen more as staffing allows. We’ve made improvements to our appointment system and added resources to our call center. We’ve granted extensions for people whose licenses have expired. We are increasing outreach efforts to underserved communities and are working with local governments and organizations to help people experiencing homelessness get an ID card.

We’ve also changed our rules to make it much easier to renew your license or ID card online. Just go to our website, dol.wa.gov, and click on the “Renew your license online” link at the top of the page. You’ll find a list of necessary documents and instructions. We realize not everyone can do business online. Encouraging as many people as possible to go online frees up appointments for those that need to come into an office.

• Additionally, we have asked the federal government for an extension on the REAL ID Act that is scheduled to be implemented October 1, 2021. When the REAL ID Act goes into effect, Washington residents will need more than a standard driver license or ID card to travel by plane. For more information visit ID2021wa.com.

We are hopeful that other initiatives we proposed will be funded by the legislature as they are in the Governor’s proposed budget, including revamping our website for clarity and accessibility.

If the number of new COVID cases keeps falling, we may be able to open more offices this summer. I hope to have more information on that in the next newsletter.

Be well,

Teresa
On January 1, 2021, a new vital records law and rules went into effect that changes the ordering requirements for Washington birth and death certificates. There are many changes made by the new vital records law. Some of the changes include:

- Limiting the release of certified copies (or certificates) of birth, death, and fetal death records to a qualified applicant, who is the subject of the record or has a qualifying relationship with the person whose record they are requesting.
- Requiring all qualified applicants to provide identification and proof of eligibility documentation.
- Increasing the certificate fee to $25.
- Not charging a fee for birth certificates for people experiencing homelessness who were born in Washington State.
- Adding a non-binary “X” sex designation option on vital records was made possible last year.

For answers to frequently asked questions click here.

**RECIROCITY AGREEMENTS WITH 5 COUNTRIES HELPS YOU SKIP THE DRIVE AND WRITTEN LICENSING TESTS**

The Department of Licensing currently has reciprocity agreements with British Columbia, Germany, Taiwan, Republic of Korea and Japan. These agreements make it easier for drivers from these countries that are living in Washington (WA) to obtain a WA driver’s license by skipping the driving and written licensing exams. Washington residents living in British Columbia, Germany, Taiwan, Republic of Korea and Japan have the same option.

These reciprocity agreements highlight the strong relationship between the state of Washington and these countries that have entered into an agreement with DOL. In the last five years, close to 15 thousand drivers have obtained Washington driver licenses through the reciprocity process.

As we all continue to respond to a global pandemic, many of us are not thinking about air travel. However, we want you to have information and be ready for the upcoming implementation of the REAL ID Act.
REAL ID requirements go into effect October 1, 2021.
You may already have what you need.

REAL ID is a federal law, not an actual piece of ID. Congress passed the REAL ID Act in 2005. The act established minimum security standards for state-issued driver licenses and ID cards. Starting October 1, 2021 anyone traveling by airplane or visiting certain federal facilities must use a REAL ID compliant license or ID card.

You can use any of these identification options to board domestic flights:

- Permanent Resident Card (Green Card)
- U.S. Military ID
- U.S. Passport
- U.S. Passport Card
- Foreign Passport
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Employment Authorization Card (I-766)
- Federally recognized, tribal-issued photo ID
- Enhanced Driver License (EDL)
- Enhanced Identification Card (EID)

You can find out more about REAL ID here.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

If you don’t fly or don’t plan on crossing international borders, then REAL ID won’t affect you.

* DOL has asked for an extension to the October 2021 implementation date.
Always try DOL’s Online Services First

Public-facing Department of Licensing offices, including driver licensing offices and prorate and fuel tax counters, remain open by appointment only. Drive testing and knowledge testing also are ongoing.

Appointments are for customers who cannot complete their transactions any other way, such as online, by phone, or by mail. We strongly encourage residents to take advantage of expanded online services. You can renew your license or ID up to a year before it is set to expire.

DOL urges residents with non-urgent needs to stay home and stay healthy, if possible. If an office visit can't be avoided, be aware that we are operating at significantly reduced capacity to allow for social distancing.

DOL online services are the first option in most instances.

- Not everyone can do business online. Customers that can complete their transaction online are encouraged to do so and free up appointments for those that can’t.
- There are a lot of services you can do online. Customers are strongly encouraged to go to our website first and take advantage of the following services:
  - Renewing a driver license, identification card, or vehicle registration online. Temporary waiver allows persons under age 24 and over 70 to renew online.
  - Applying for a first-time non-photo instruction permit.
  - Commercial driver licenses (CDLs) and commercial learner permits (CLPs) expiring on or after March 1, 2020 were extended to May 31, 2021. All CDL types and endorsements are covered, except for the hazardous materials (hazmat) endorsement.
  - Driver licenses and instruction permits expiring March 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021 have been automatically extended.
  - Extensions are ending soon. Go online to renew your driver license or instruction permit.
Notes from the Call Center

Our driver licensing offices are operating with limited capacity and our call center is experiencing unprecedented call volumes. In January 2021, we answered nearly 83,000 calls. Based on the increased number of calls, we’ve added more staff to our phone lines.

Following are some of our current hot topics and frequently asked questions.

I got an email saying my appointment at a driver licensing office was canceled, how do I get a new one?
Occasionally we need to cancel appointments due to inclement weather or other issues. In those cases, we will contact you when we return to the office to reschedule. You do not need to try and schedule again.

I’m having trouble logging into my License eXpress account, can you tell me my password?
While we can’t tell you your password our Customer Service Center at 360-902-3900 may be able to help. If we’re unable to resolve over the phone, our representatives will assist you with next steps.

I don’t have internet or a computer so I can’t renew my driver license online or make an appointment, what can I do?
We can assist you through our Customer Service Center at 360-902-3900.

I received a renewal notice for my driver license in the mail, but I’ve heard expiration dates are being extended. Should I wait to renew?
There’s no benefit to waiting. Most people are eligible to renew online making the process safe and easy!

For more information, please go to dol.wa.gov
DOL Participates in Virtual Resource Fair

More community resource fairs have gone virtual. Earlier this year, our Outreach team had the opportunity to participate in the Tri-Cities Virtual Resource Fair. We were excited to connect with our community where participants learned how to access community resources from the safety of their home.

Participants were invited to visit DOL’s virtual booth to chat with our Outreach team and get information about driver licensing and identification requirements, how to renew online, how to schedule an appointment to visit a driver licensing office, information about REAL ID and much more.

The DOL booth also included information on job opportunities at DOL, which was of interest to several people who participated in this virtual event.

The platform used for this virtual event worked out very well. Many thanks to WorkSource Columbia Basin for inviting DOL to participate in this year’s Tri-Cities Community Resource Fair.
Your voice is important to us.

We actively use feedback to improve our community engagement and communications. Following is an anonymous survey. It will take no longer than 5-10 minutes of your time and provide us with valuable insights.

English:


Spanish:

https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6188508/74fba5f1e29f

Follow us

DOL has more than 40,000 followers on social media and we want to grow. For the latest updates, check out our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and the DOL Blog!

Using Google Translate, all of our blog articles can be translated into any language with the click of a button.
Community Outreach CONTACTS

We take pride in collaborating with local agencies and organizations to assist Washington residents to better understand agency services and programs. Contact us if you would like information about our services, or are interested in scheduling an event with one of our representatives:

- Email us: DOLCommOutreach@dol.wa.gov
- Call us: 509.290.8568
- Invite us to your next event with our OUTREACH REQUEST FORM.
- Use our ID2021 toolkit to inform your community.