Department of Licensing use of facial recognition technology
The Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) uses facial recognition technology for the purpose of verifying the identity of an applicant for an identification card or driver license. The agency’s goal is to ensure the integrity of driver licenses and ID cards while protecting the personal information of all Washingtonians.

How does the facial recognition system work?
Using a driver license or ID card photo, the system creates a digital template of facial features such as eye sockets, cheekbones and sides of the mouth.

Before a new license is issued, the system compares the photo it creates with all of the other photos already in our database to determine if someone is attempting to apply for a license using someone else’s identity. If a match is found, it is flagged for review by specially trained DOL staff.

Who has access to DOL’s facial recognition system?
DOL is the sole administrator of the facial recognition system. There is no external access to this system.

Per state law, a state, local, or federal law enforcement agency must submit a court order to have DOL run a photo through our facial recognition system.