

What is Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)?

RFID is a wireless technology that stores and retrieves data remotely on devices. Technology components of an RFID system consist of an RFID tag with a microchip and antenna, a reader with an antenna, and a database. For added security and border crossing convenience, an RFID tag is embedded in the new Enhanced Driver License and Identification card (EDL/ID).

- **The EDL/ID is voluntary**
- **Call (360) 902-3900 to find an office near you or visit our website**

How does RFID work in Washington State's EDL/ID card?

The EDL/ID card includes an Ultra-High Frequency Passive Vicinity RFID tag.

- **Ultra-high frequencies** typically offer better range, and can transfer data faster than low and high frequencies.
- **Passive** RFID tags do not have a power source. They draw power from the RFID reader to energize the microchip's circuits. The antenna enables the tag to transmit the information on the chip to a reader. The reader converts the radio waves reflected back from the RFID tag into digital information that is passed on to the computers that use it.
- **Vicinity** RFID tags can be read from several feet away from the reader.

The RFID uses the low-end of the electromagnetic spectrum. The waves coming from the reader are similar to the waves coming to your car radio.

The RFID tag does not contain any personal identifying information, just a unique reference number. At the border, the RFID reader will energize the RFID tag and transmit the EDL/ID's unique reference number back to the border officer. The number will be matched to our records to verify the information contained on the front of the EDL/ID card.

Data encryption, secure networks, and firewalls will protect the transmission of the EDL/ID information. For added security, we will provide a security sleeve to protect the RFID tag from being read when the cardholder is not using it for border crossing.

This RFID technology is required by the federal government to facilitate rapid identification checks at the border, and complies with minimum requirements and best practices for card security. We will fully disclose the use of RFID, its purpose, content, and security to all EDL/ID applicants and interested parties.

RCW 19.300.20 makes it a class C felony for a person to intentionally scan another person's identification device remotely, without that person's prior knowledge and consent, for the purpose of fraud, identity theft, or for any other illegal purpose..